

GEORGE BLANDA: "WHY I'M GLAD FAME CAME LATE"

BY JIM SCOTT



ALL-STAR SPORTS

NOV. 50c
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THERE'S MORE TO
VIDA BLUE
THAN DIAMOND GREATNESS
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A NEW LOOK
AT ED
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THE PIRATE
FORMULA-
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DUGOUT CHATTER

Dear Editor,

I think the article—"Is The Hollywood Star System Ruining Pro Sports"—by George Girsch in the September issue is one-sided and very unfair. Girsch makes Joe Namath look like the devil in disguise. From the beginning, he says, "Do they really think that they're not hurting anybody else?" If you recall, the reason Namath came out of retirement over the Bachelors III affair, was because he didn't want to hurt his family, friends and teammates.

I've heard nothing of the sort that Joe "practically demanded that the Jets management grant him a loan as the price for his playing the 1970 season." As big as a celebrity as Joe is, something like that would have hit the papers.

Girsch says Namath created a turmoil that can never be forgotten. The Jets have already forgotten it and that's where it counts. They forgot it after the last game of the season when Namath and Al Atkinson shook hands in the dressing room.

On the whole, I thought the article was written in very poor taste.

Nelwyn Hollis, Litchfield, Ill.

Dear Editor,

I am a new reader to your magazine. I enjoy reading about sports and have found that your magazine is the best in its field. From reading the letter page in the September issue, I found that your May issue contained a story on Roberto Clemente. Since he is my favorite player, I hope you do more stories on him.

Ricky Wolfson, Dallas, Texas

Dear Editor,

I am conducting a poll on the 10 future stars in baseball. Please send your picks to Randy Rummmler, 5857 N. Lake Drive, Milwaukee, Wis., 53217.

Dear Editor,

I would appreciate it if your readers would send me their picks on basketball's all-pro team (including ABA players) and also baseball's all-league teams (in both the AL and the NL). Please

write to Mark Roshkind, 117 DeHaven Drive, Yonkers, N.Y. 10703.

Dear Editor,

I am conducting a survey on the greatest living and greatest ever baseball player on each major league team. They can be the same in some cases. Please write to Stuart G. Morrell, 10 Media Lane, Stonybrook, N.Y. 11790.

Dear Editor,

I am a great Phillie fan and I would like to hear from anyone who has something to say—either pro or con—about the team. Please write to Debbie Marchetti, 435 Centre Street, Freeland, Pa. 18224.

Dear Editor,

I am taking a poll on the fans' favorite baseball team. Also, please do a story on Joe Torre. Readers wishing to take part in my poll may write to Willis Kern Jr., 913 N. Lee St., Bloomington, Ill. 61701.

FAN CLUB NEWS

The following have fan clubs for the player or team indicated. Please write to them for information.

CARL YASTRZEMSKI
and **JIMMY ELLIS**
David Clark
30 Clifford Drive
West Hartford, Conn. 06107

SPORTS CLUB
Clyde Matsuka
1459 Punchbowl Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

ROGER METZGER
and **JACK HIATT**
Guy Simmons
215 S. 2nd Street
Eunice, La. 70535
or Ted McManus
P.O. Box 642
Eunice, La. 70535

DUANE JOSEPHSON,
STEVE KEALEY
and **JOSE ORTIZ**
Laurie Wojciechowski
4445 N. Major
Chicago, Ill. 60630

DON KESSINGER
Sue Leschak
4840 W. Dakin Street
Chicago, Ill. 60641

REGGIE CLEVELAND
Arthur Silber
2117 College Street
Montreal 378, Quebec

WES PARKER
Tom Runkle
1334 Cedar Lake Road
Round Lake Beach, Ill. 60073

CHICAGO CUBS
Jim Ascher
509 Declaration Road
Virginia Beach, Va. 23462

DETROIT TIGERS
Ray Sherman
406 River
Cadillac, Mich. 49601

The following would like to join fans clubs for the players or teams indicated. If you have the fan club please write to them.

FRANK ROBINSON,
CARL YASTRZEMSKI,
BALTIMORE ORIOLES,
ROBERTO CLEMENTE,
HANK AARON
and **VIDA BLUE**
John Abbott
Hilton Road
Hilton, N.Y. 14468

TIM MCCARVER
Willis Kern Jr.
913 N. Lee Street
Bloomington, Ill. 61701



An Important Message To Every Man And Woman In America Losing His Or Her Hair

If you are troubled by thinning hair, dandruff, itchy scalp, if you fear approaching baldness, read the rest of this statement carefully. It may mean the difference to you between saving your hair and losing the rest of it to eventual baldness.

Baldness is simply a matter of subtraction. When the number of new hairs fail to equal the number of falling hair, you end up minus your head of hair (bald). Why not avoid baldness by preventing unnecessary loss of hair? Why not turn the tide of battle on your head by eliminating needless causes of hair loss and give Nature a chance to grow more hair for you? Many of the country's dermatologists and other foremost hair and scalp specialists believe that seborrhea, a common scalp disorder, causes hair loss. What is seborrhea? It is a bacterial infection of the scalp that can eventually cause permanent damage to the hair follicles. Its visible evidence is "thinning" hair. Its end result is baldness. Its symptoms are dry, itchy scalp, dandruff, oily hair, head scales, and progressive hair loss.

So, if you are beginning to notice that your forehead is getting larger, beginning to notice that there is too much hair on your comb, beginning to be worried about the dry-

ness of your hair, the itchy scalp, the ugly dandruff — these are Nature's Red Flags warning you of impending baldness. Even if you have been losing your hair for some time, don't let seborrhea rob you of the rest of your hair.

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—Miss C. T., San Angelo, Tex.

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SPORT SHORTS



Luis Aparicio of Boston claims he was embarrassed at the overwhelming lead he compiled in gaining the starting shortstop's position in the All-Star game.

"You have to respect the fans, but I didn't expect to make it hitting .200," the little Venezuelan commented. "I voted for Belanger (the Orioles' Mark) myself. Everybody said Leo Cardenas of Minnesota, but this guy (Belanger) is the best shortstop in the league."

Belanger's every-day manager and the AL's pilot for the classic showed his respect for Luis' ability by keeping him in the lineup the entire game.

Defensive end Fred Dryer of the New York Giants argues against the charges of Dave Meggyesy, George Sauer and others that football dehumanizes its participants.

"A lot of guys make it more in their heads than it really is," says Dryer. "I don't agree with Sauer or Meggyesy. There are guys playing football because they love it and enjoy it. You play something you love and get paid for it, it's a rare thing in America. If they let it bum them, what kind of people are they? I don't feel dehumanized because I keep my individualism. I'm never going to be a non-individual, a stamped out person."

Lee Trevino, winner of the U.S. Open, British Open and Canadian Open this year, offers this insight into his golfing philosophy:

"I never give up even if I sometimes look like it. I could be in Vietnam dodging rockets. I'd rather be putting those two footers. I don't go well when everything is running smooth. I have to get mad at myself to get charged up. Show me a man who is calm and he never makes any money. To be a hustler, you have to get mad."

Boston writers asked Ted Williams whom he thought the promising young batters in the American League were.

The last of the .400 hitters said he was extremely sorry to say that in his estimation there weren't any.

Williams, incidentally, is advocating a rule that would make it mandatory for a club to announce at game time whether its players on military duty will be available at any time during the game.

Author George Plimpton, who wrote *Paper Lion*, found out that the Baltimore Colts are just as tough as the Detroit Lions. He suffered a bloody nose and a dislocated thumb while working out at the Super Bowl champions' camp in mid-July. He also limped off the field after his legs took a beating.

A good example of the extreme disappointment of Boston Bruin fans over the team's failure to win the Stanley Cup is the fact that Bobby Orr's hockey stick went for only \$130 in a sports auction on Boston's educational TV network. Last year, the same item went for \$1,000.

Willie Mays let the nation know on the Dick Cavett Show that he is displeased at references to his age. "Hey," Willie snapped at Cavett, "why does everyone want to ask about my age? I may play three or four more years."

Cavett cut back in with: "George Blanda is 43 and he..."

"Blanda is only a place-kicker," said Willie. "He comes on and plays a few seconds once a week. I play every day. Are we going to discuss football or baseball?"

National League hitters were not very impressed by Vida Blue when they faced him in the All-Star game. Johnny Bench, Hank Aaron, Joe Torre, Bud Harrelson, among others, all thought that both Steve Carlton of St. Louis and Don Wilson of Houston threw harder. They did concede that Blue might have been somewhat nervous in his first All-Star appearance but Hank Aaron said: "When they say that he throws harder

than Sandy Koufax, they are lying. Koufax threw harder on a bad day."

Vic Hadfield has succeeded Bob Nevin (who was traded to Minnesota) as captain of the New York Rangers. Hadfield, a 10-year veteran, becomes the Rangers' 14th captain in 46 seasons.

"Vic has all the qualities you look for in a captain," said manager-coach Emile Francis. "I'm sure he'll be a popular choice." Said Hadfield: "I wish the new season could start tomorrow."

Lance Rentzel believes the traumatic events following his morals offense charge in Dallas have had a cathartic effect on him.

"I've learned a lot about people and I've learned to appreciate my wife and family," Lance said. "I've had to take a hard, long look at myself and that's something that few of us ever get a chance to do. But I had to do it."

"I've come out of this thing with my feet on the ground. Yes, I'm a religious person, and I've strengthened this foundation. One can only take care of so much. I believe I'm a better man than I was, and I hope to prove it."

Although he had not started a game in more than a month, Dodger third baseman Bill Grabarkewitz received more than 65,000 All-Star votes. The clue may lie in a letter a youngster wrote to Bill. "I voted for you 125 times," the fan revealed.

Mrs. Margaret Dryden, mother of Montreal's brilliant young goalie, Ken, claims that her son is not as calm as he appears to be on the ice. "I suspect he's very excited inside," says Mrs. Dryden.

Mom, however, is pleased with the way her son handles success. "It hasn't seemed to bother him," she says. "Ken seems to be able to take things in stride."

"Guys have got to play hurt," said hard-nosed Joe Kapp in referring to the Patriots' top receiver, Ron Sellers. "Ron Sellers can't keep coming out of games. He's a great pass catcher but he's got to stay in there. He's got to say, 'Dammit, the tackle's playing hurt, I'll play hurt.'"

If the front-running Athletics represent the American League in the World Series this fall, the Oakland Raiders will be forced to shift their NFL game against Denver, which is scheduled in Oakland for Oct. 10. And, if the Series happens to go seven games, the Raiders would also have to change their Oct. 17 contest against Philadelphia. It takes three days to convert the Oakland Coliseum from baseball to football and the cost ranges from \$5,000 to \$7,000.

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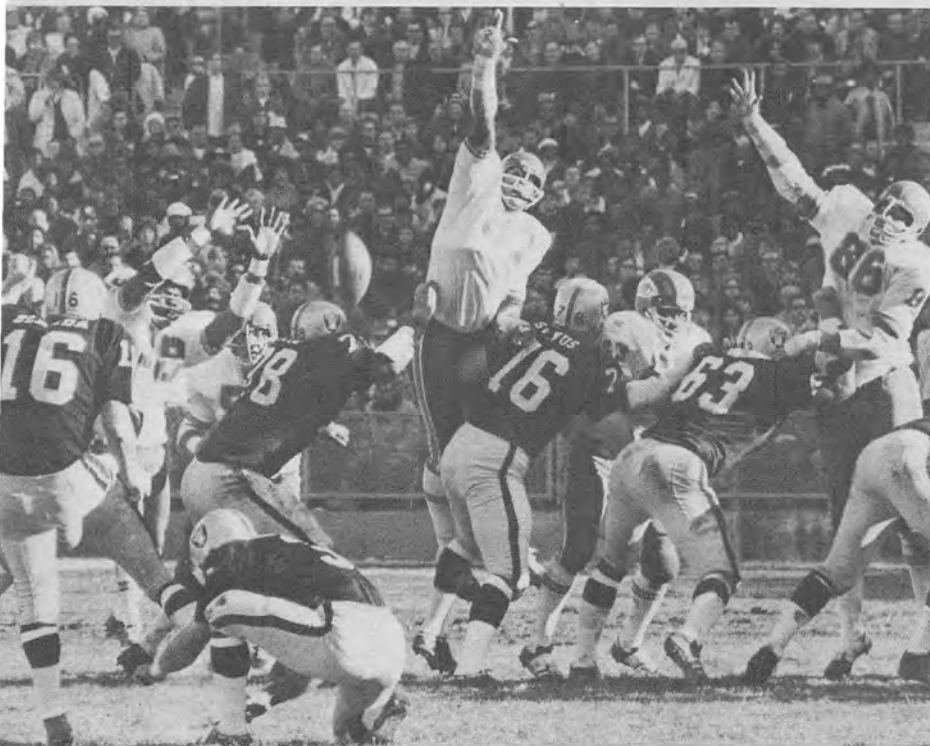
MAIL TODAY

"WHY I'M GLAD

"I know some very young people who let fame handle them," says the Raider champion of middle-aged America who sees his on-the-field heroics as having a direct bearing on the generation gap.

Specially Written for All-Star Sports
By Jim Scott
Nationally Known Sports Authority

FAME CAME LATE"- GEORGE BLANDA



Sunday afternoon got to be known as the "George Blanda Hour" on national television last season. Above he kicked a field goal in final three seconds as Oakland gained a tie with the Chiefs. At L. he throws pass over hands of Colts' Bubba Smith. At R. George shows grip.

GEORGE FREDERICK Blanda is the greatest substitute (for Daryle Lamonica) since margarine.

More than that he, at 43, rates as the greatest athlete the world has ever known at his age, the only man to play pro ball in four decades.

In fact, America took him to her bosom in 1970-71, when he also was named as the most outstanding athlete in the nation.

What Old George did, of course, was to save the Oakland Raiders from defeat in five consecutive games to land them in the playoffs for the fourth straight season.

From the end of the 1970 campaign to the start of the 1971 Blanda found himself a folk hero.

Norman Mailer, author of "Of a Fire on the Moon," was asked at a book luncheon if the Astronauts weren't the true

heroes of our time to most Americans.

"No, though they might be for kids," he replied. "My own hero is George Blanda, who's about my age. If heroism means grace under pressure, then George fits the role. He has the warmth, which the astronauts could never achieve."

Hundreds of cities sought to honor him at community banquets. Blanda agreed to visit 25 at a fee of \$1,000 each, plus expenses.

Like a conquering hero, Geriatric George received the red-carpet treatment at every stop. Perhaps the honor he appreciated most came from Milwaukee, where he was presented the only personally authorized award by the late Vince Lombardi, handed him by Vince's widow, Marie.

The trophy was based on dedication. The emcee, Howard Cosell, explained it

to the huge crowd, viz: "Dedication means different things, but to Lombardi it was the willingness to pay the price in pursuit of excellence. Blanda has certainly paid the price."

Before the start of the 1971 season, George served as a salesman, singer, trophy collector, television personality and banquet speaker.

Blanda is a national account executive and part-owner of a Chicago-based express company (Railway Express) and, wherever he went, he also hustled business.

"I found all doors were open to me now," said George, laughter playing in his pale blue eyes. "So I've been darting in to hang up sales."

Betty, his wife, once said she'd never be surprised at anything George did. But, since she never heard her husband sing, she was stunned when he cut a record for Daybreak.

At first Blanda was asked just to recite as did Walter Brennan in "Septem-

ber Song." But the director, Sonny Burke, liked his baritone voice.

So George sang Stewart Hamblin's vintage classic, "This Old House" and, on the other side, a tune just written for him, "It's Never Too Late."

"George was shaky at first as he never was in football," said Burke. "But we got him to singing just like he was in a shower. This settled him down. And he sounded all right."

Blanda also was thrilled to receive the Bert Bell Trophy since he was the first from the AFL to do so. And in the poll for the AFC's player of the year, it was strictly no contest. George collected 23 votes. In second place were his teammate, Lamonica, and Baltimore's John Unitas, each with two votes.

Last June, his tour about over, Blanda joined other quarterbacks at Bill Harrah's prestigious golf tournament.

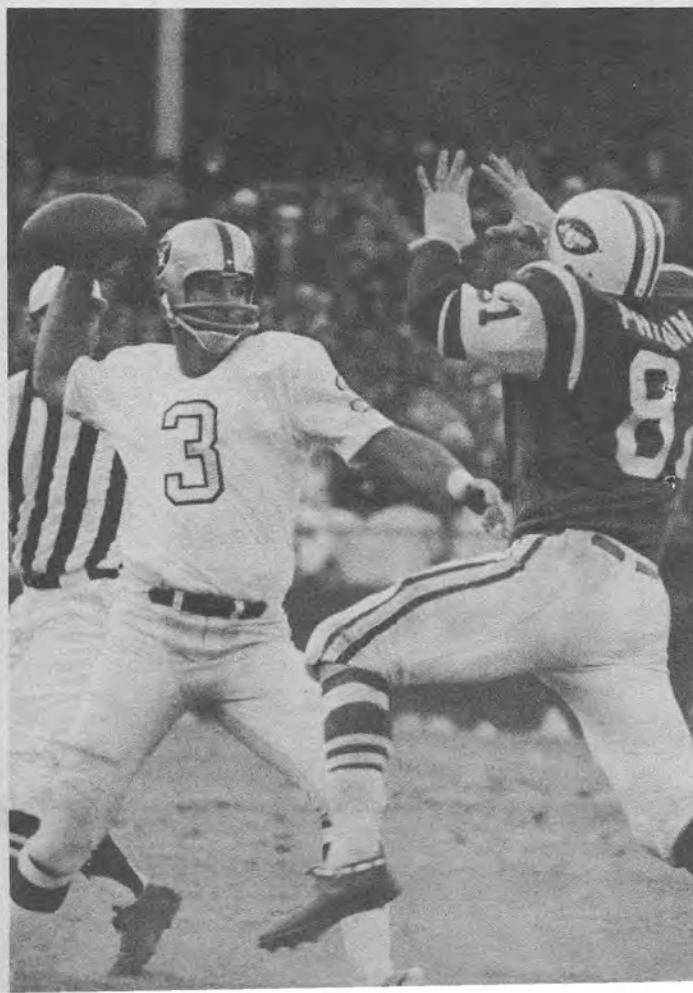
Relaxing over a drink, he shook his wavy thatch of brown hair in disbelief.

"All these awards still seem like a crazy dream to me," he said. "Why I threw 36 touchdown passes in one season and kicked 456 extra points in the AFL before last season—and nothing happened. Nobody cared."

"But now I kick a couple of field goals and throw a couple of touchdown passes and all of a sudden I'm a big hero." (He's more than that in Oakland. One late season sign proclaimed, "God



Some of Blanda's key teammates on the Raiders are Hewitt Dixon (35, above), who was third in rushing in the AFC in 1970 with 861 yards; Warren Wells (81, L., below), who caught 43 passes, and regular QB Daryle Lamonica (3, below), whom George bailed out many times.



is Alive and wearing No. 16 for us").

The difference, of course, was in timing. Jack Benny couldn't have done it better. What George did was compress all his heroics into the last few minutes of five games.

Verily, Sunday afternoon became the George Blanda hour on national television as he re-enacted "The Perils of Pauline." His heroics shook up Northern California such as nothing else had since the earthquake of 1906.

Blanda reminded one strongly of a skilled surgeon working over a suppos-

wasn't satisfied. With three seconds remaining, George hit a 52-yard field goal to win the game, 23-20.

The following week at Denver, the Raiders found themselves behind, 19-17, with four minutes to go. Plainly, it was time for the weekly Blanda miracle. Though nothing was wrong with Lamonia, George was rushed out on the field. Unable to move before against the stiff Bronco defense, the Raiders were promptly ignited by Blanda, who took them on an 80-yard touchdown drive. He nailed Fred Biletnikoff on a 20-yard

shaw, the big guard, has an explanation for this.

"George is actually playing the game in his head on the sidelines," explained Upshaw. "He studies the enemy defenses. He knows what will work and what won't. When he comes in, he has outlined in his mind every play he will call."

"How is Blanda in practice? Does he work as hard as the younger players?"

Gene laughed. "You better believe it," he said. "He works hard on his kicking and passing game, and, when we run,



Sure-handed Fred Biletnikoff grabs a Blanda pass (above). At R. Blanda tries on his kicking shoe. "I don't want to retire until the Raiders win the NFL title," says the 43-year-old star.



edly dying victim, trying to revive him.

He had all the tools of a surgeon, and he displayed the same confidence as he bent over the victim. His scalpel was his strong right arm, his toe the life-giving oxygen.

Blanda started his incredible 1970 season Oct. 25 when he replaced the injured Lamonia and proceeded to throw three touchdown passes to whip Pittsburgh, 31-14.

Lamonia, known as "The Mad Bomber," played the whole game at Kansas City the next week. But, with three seconds left, Blanda again was called up. This time he kicked a 48-yard field goal against the wind for a 17-17 tie, which put the Raiders in first place in the AFC West.

The third Sunday Blanda was called in with Cleveland leading, 20-13, and only four minutes to go. Under a blistering rush, which he so dearly loves, George hummed a 14-yard pass to Warren Wells to tie up the game. But he still

pass for a 24-19 victory for Oakland.

On Nov. 22, the Raiders tried to get by against San Diego—and almost made it—without their old warrior. But, with seven seconds left, George was again summoned, this time to kick a 19-yard field goal for a 20-17 conquest.

Many football observers feel that the Raiders would have run away with the NFL title last season, instead of losing to champion Baltimore in the semifinals, had Blanda been given more playing time. After all, he was never injured; in fact, he never even seemed to be out of breath.

Once, when Coach John Madden apologized for using him so much, George couldn't understand it. "Hell, I haven't had a real good workout this season," he countered.

What puzzles football authorities is why Blanda is so awesomely effective every time he enters the game, even though he always comes in "cold."

One of his key protectors, Gene Up-

shaw, the big guard, has an explanation for this. "George is just a wonderful specimen, both physically and mentally. Real good in everything he does. In golf, he has a 5 handicap. Geez, he might as well play at scratch. And I don't think he's ever lost a card game on our plane rides."

"But how does George manage to pick up the entire team?"

"It must be because we know he'll come through," related Upshaw, "and we just give our all to help him out. George plays largely by rote. He's seen every situation a hundred times before. And he knows how to beat any defense. He sets up quick. It's all second nature to him now. Most anyone can become good at anything after years of working on it. It doesn't happen though in sports for the body wears out. Not George's, however. He still has the look of an athlete about him. You notice how he at-

(Continued on page 50)

A NEW LOOK AT ED KRANEPOOL

Prime prospect at 17—"has been" at 25—the big slugger's finally begun to see a few things in a new light. And at age 26, he might be just coming into his very own at last.

Specially Written for All-Star Sports
By Bert Rosenthal
Nationally Known Sports Authority

THE air was crackling with tension and excitement. More than 50,000 spectators were jammed into Shea Stadium on the final day of June 1971. They were there to watch the Pittsburgh Pirates, number one team in the National League's Eastern Division, play the New York Mets, their closest pursuers. They were also there to watch Nolan Ryan, the Mets' flame-throwing right-hander and possibly the fastest pitcher in baseball, challenge the Pirates' Willie Stargell, the game's hottest hitter. Stargell, off to a torrid start, already had broken the record for the most homers through the month of June with 28.

It was a classic matchup—and Ryan won, striking out Stargell three consecutive times. But Ryan was not around at the finish. The combination of 86 degree temperature, stifling humidity and the chore of running out a triple in the seventh inning forced him to retire. Danny Frisella worked the last two innings, preserving a 4-0 Met victory and getting Stargell on a grounder to second.

But when the game was over, the night's hero was not Ryan. Nor was it Frisella. And, of course, it was not Stargell. It was Ed Kranepool, the long neglected and often abused Met first baseman. Kranepool had homered in the second inning off Steve Blass for the only run the Mets really needed. It tied him with ex-Met Ron Swoboda for the club lead in career homers with 69.



"I went to spring training determined to work as hard as I could, but I really didn't think I would make it," says Kranepool. "I'm glad the Mets had faith. It's nice to go to the ball park and know you are in the lineup and can concentrate on getting ready for the pitcher."

His second time up, Kranepool beat out an infield bouncer, not an easy task for a slow-moving, 6-3, 215-pounder. Then, in the sixth inning, Kranepool followed a single by Cleon Jones with his third straight hit. A single by Ken Boswell scored Jones, and another hit by Jerry Grote sent Kranepool charging for the plate. He made it with a hard slide, kicking up a storm of dust around home. "I like to run," he said afterward. "It's fun. I'd like to be like Buddy Harrelson and Tommie Agee and steal lots of bases."

That's like Harrelson saying he would like to be like Stargell and hit lots of home runs. Kranepool is in his tenth season with the Mets—he is the only



player to have spent at least part of each season with the club during its entire existence—and he had stolen exactly nine bases. In his first three attempts this year, he was thrown out three times. But it reflected a significant change in attitude on the part of the 26-year-old Kranepool. In the past, he had been severely criticized for his lack of hustle. Now, everyone had come to praise him.

The fans cheered him. "It's nice to hear the cheers instead of the boos," he said. "It's nice to know that somebody's in your corner."

His teammates cheered him. "The Ed Kranepool you are seeing now is the Kranepool the Mets were looking for for a long time," said All-Star pitcher Tom Seaver, who, in the past, had rapped Kranepool's lackadaisical attitude. "Getting rid of Ron Swoboda helped him. Maybe they found company in their misery when they were together, but Kranepool is a little different now. He hustles on the field . . . he's more aggressive at the plate . . . and you should hear him on the bench. He's a holler guy now."

To Seaver's suggestion that the trading of Swoboda helped him, Kranepool said, "Bull." He added: "The big difference is that I'm seeing the ball better than ever and I'm swinging better. I'm

seeing the inside and the outside pitch and I'm hitting them. I'm more aggressive this year than I've ever been. I'm attacking the ball more than I did in my younger years. I knew I had to, because I felt that this would be my last shot with the Mets."

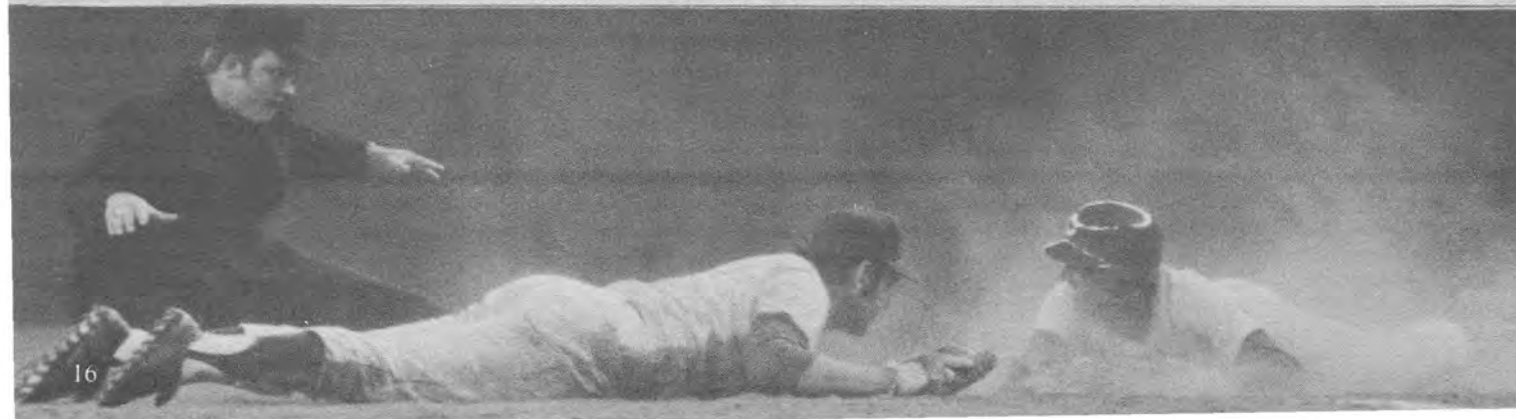
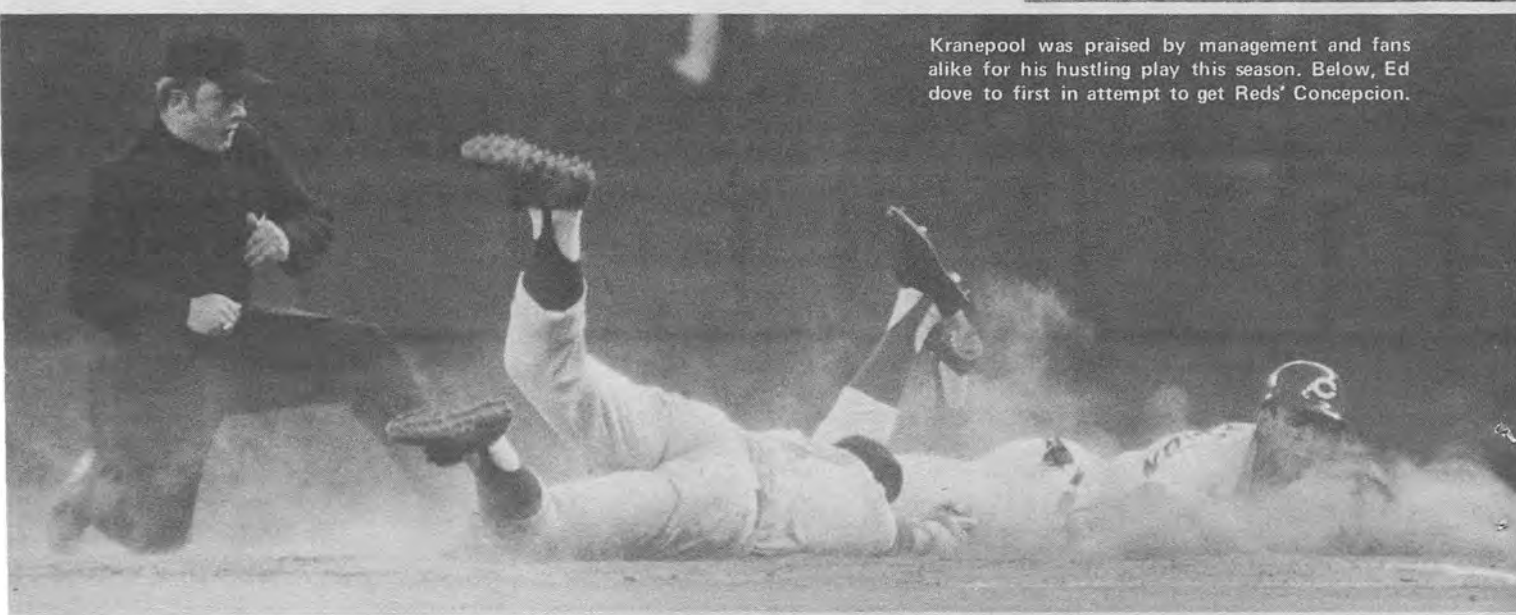
And his manager cheered him. "I've never seen Kranepool swing the bat better than he is right now," said Gil Hodges. "He has become an aggressive hitter. That's the difference. He's going up there and swinging instead of being a defensive hitter the way he used to be."

For Hodges to say anything nice about him was quite an admission. For one thing, Hodges says very little about any of his players—or to any of his players. And secondly, Kranepool had verbally blasted his manager during spring training. "He's got about as much confidence in me as I have in him," said the big first baseman.

Kranepool had gone to spring training in St. Petersburg, Fla., from his home in South Farmingdale, N.Y., with the attitude that he would not be playing for the Mets this season. "All I want to do this spring is get in shape and maybe impress one of the 23 other clubs," he said. "I know I'm not going to be playing for the Mets this year. Not after last year. Not after 47 official at-bats. I hope they trade me. I'm not ask-



Kranepool was praised by management and fans alike for his hustling play this season. Below, Ed dove to first in attempt to get Reds' Concepcion.





Two men who have seen less action because of the reformation of Kranepool are first baseman Donn Clendenon (below), who was only being used against left-handed pitchers; and first baseman-outfielder Art Shamsky (24, above), who felt as if he had been forgotten. Kranepool's consistent play earned him nickname "Steady Eddie" from teammates.



ing to be traded, but I expect to be traded."

With Donn Clendenon, Art Shamsky and Mike Jorgensen also available for first base duty, Kranepool didn't expect to play much—if at all—this season. "Of course, you never can tell," he commented. "Something could happen to one of them and everything would change. But the way things are now, I don't see him (Hodges) changing his opinion of me. I'm sure this club is going to make a deal, but whether I'm in it remains to be seen. They have more outfielders than they need and they certainly have more first basemen than they need."

Hodges said he did not rate Kranepool as his number four first baseman. "It would be unfair to do that to him publicly," said Hodges. "He's down here to make the club. All he has to do is impress somebody for a short period of time."

Asked if Kranepool ever had impressed him, Hodges thought for a while, then answered: "When I came here, they told me he had hit left-handers better than most of our right-handed hitters."

That was in 1967. Kranepool, however, said: "I think he had his mind made up about me before he got here."

It was the same opinion he believed Hodges had of him before spring training this year. Nevertheless, he was determined to prove to the other major league managers that he could play well. "That's why I busted my butt," he said. "I wanted them to see me and trade for me."

Hodges saw him and played him. Instead of playing his way off the team, he played his way on it. He beat out the other two left-handed hitters, Shamsky and Jorgensen, for the starting job against right-handed pitchers. And his consistency forced the slugging Clendenon onto the bench more than Clendenon liked, and earned him the nickname of "Steady Eddie." One Met fan became so enthralled with Kranepool's play that he unfurled a banner reading "Killer Kranepool." It was far more complimentary than the banner that was carried during Banner Day 1964, which said, "Is Ed Kranepool Over The Hill?" At the time, Kranepool was 19 years old.

Now, at the age of 26, he finally was realizing his potential... a potential that seemed evident in high school. At James Monroe High School in the Bronx, N.Y., he had broken Hall of Famer Hank Greenberg's home run records. Such slugging exploits caused the Mets to sign him for an \$85,000 bonus on June 27, 1962.

"The Mets promised they would take me on a western trip and give me a chance to make the big club right away," Kranepool says, "so I signed

with them. I was supposed to fly to Chicago the next day to talk to the White Sox, and I also had an appointment with the Yankees."

Yankee Manager Ralph Houk was not disappointed in losing Kranepool. "I saw Kranepool as a kid and knew the kind of money he wanted," remembers Houk. "We didn't care that we didn't get him. We didn't think he was worth it. He couldn't pull the ball and left-handed hitters have to pull in Yankee Stadium."

Duke Snider, the ex-Brooklyn Dodger star who joined the Mets in 1963, was another who didn't think Kranepool pulled the ball enough. Snider, a sharp left-handed pull hitter who used to drive shots at the right field wall in Brooklyn's old Ebbets Field, tried to offer Kranepool some advice. "Pull, Ed, pull," he said. "If you want to make a living in this game, you'd better learn how to pull the ball."

Kranepool, all of 18 at the time, snapped at the veteran. "Why don't you shut up," he bristled. "You're not going so good."

Snider cursed at Kranepool and turned away. "It wasn't all that bad," Kranepool says now. "Duke didn't know that Casey (Manager Casey Stengel) had ordered me to hit straight away. I was going bad and you can't get organized until you hit straight away. The papers made too much out of it."

This season, Kranepool is going with the pitch. If it's inside, he's pulling it toward right field, like he did with the homer against Blass. The ball sailed high and deep over the right field fence. If the pitch is down the middle, he's hitting it toward center field, like he did with the two singles against Pittsburgh. And if he's pitched on the outside, he's been punching the ball toward left field. "Maybe at 26, I've finally reached my potential," he says.

He apparently has. His metamorphosis from a lethargic, sulking, sometimes first baseman in New York and Tidewater (the Mets' International League farm club) into a hustling, aggressive, tough player is one of the most remarkable turnovers in years. Kranepool says the changeover is due to many factors, including an opportunity to play, new determination and confidence, and the possibility of leaving New York.

In his first nine years with the Mets, Kranepool charges he never played long enough to make an impression. "I played four games in a row once," he recalls. "I got four hits and the next day I was on the bench. Is that what you call a chance?"

In reply, Hodges says, "It's a free country. A man can say what he wants."

And Seaver adds: "He batted nearly

(Continued on page 68)

THE MANY SIDES OF CARL ELLER



Eller (81) deflects pass thrown by Patriots' Joe Kapp at L. and (along with Jim Marshall, 70) rushes Rams' Roman Gabriel above. "I hate quarterbacks," the Vikings' "Secretary of Defense" and All-Pro defensive end says. "I look at it this way," he adds, "the quarterback has talent and I have talent. It's just a matter of matching my talent against his. I want to be the best player in the National Football League."

The "Moose" contends his life revolves around hating quarterbacks. But there is much more to him than that. He prides himself on never losing his cool. He's done a lot of thinking about the future. And he knows his joy in hitting people will get him where he wants to go.

Specially Written for All-Star Sports
By Ben Olan
Associated Press Sports Reporter

THE CORRECT terminology for Carl Eller's work for six months of each year starting in training camp in July is: Defensive lineman for the Minnesota Vikings. However, the great pro football pass rusher hardly lets a few seconds rush by when asked his interpretation of what his occupation is. "I hate quarterbacks," he states simply and emphatically.

Carl Eller stands 6-foot-6 and weighs 255 pounds. He is aptly called "Moose"

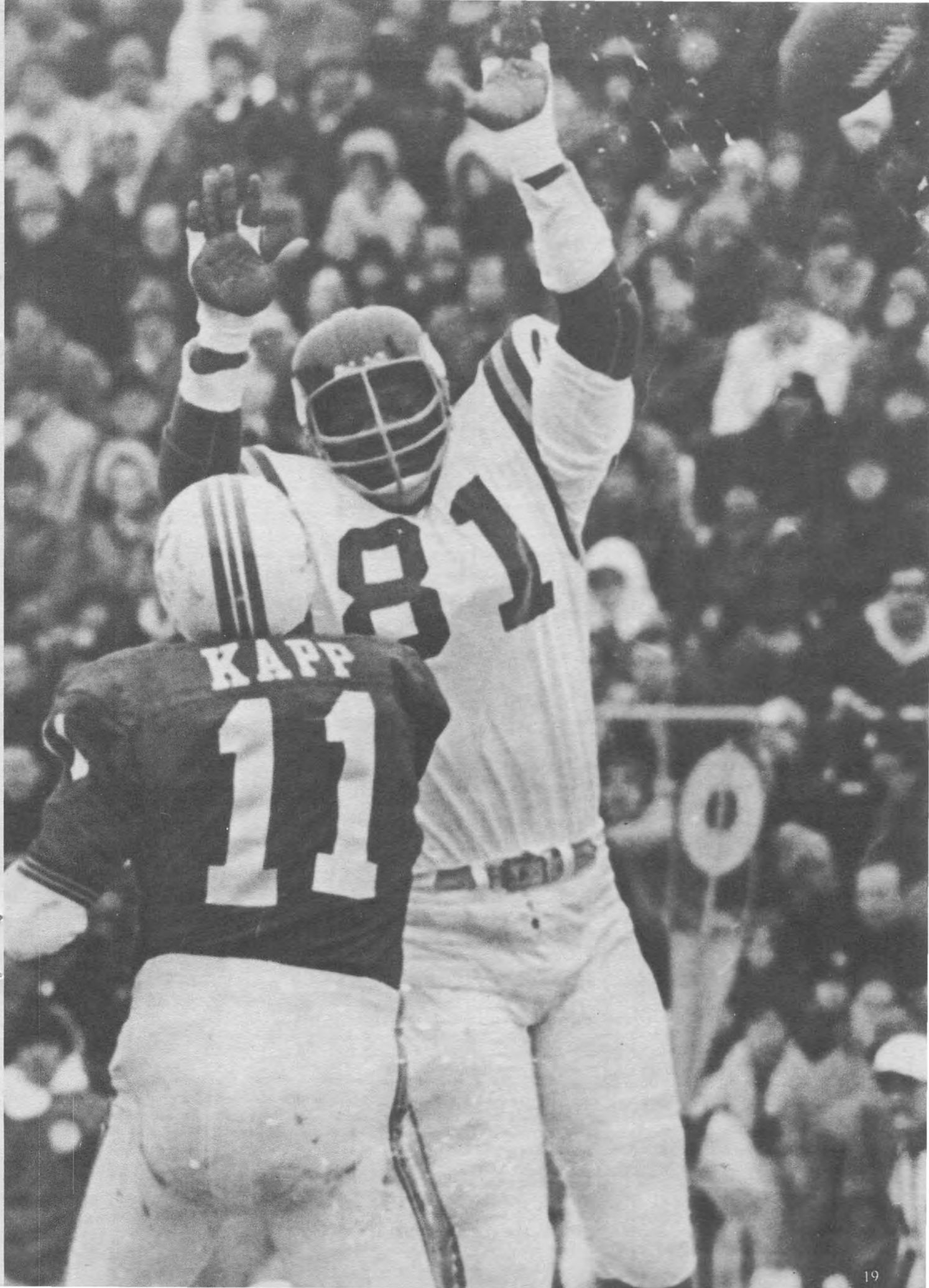
by his teammates and "Sir" by anyone else in full possession of his faculties. The 29-year-old, who migrated from Winston Salem, N.C. to an All-American collegiate career at the University of Minnesota, is in his eighth season in the National Football League. A defensive end with a fierce pass rush, he is the cornerstone of the Vikings' "Purple People Eater" defense.

Moose Eller has gone after his rush to greatness with the same single-mindedness that takes him over the tackles and into the quarterbacks Sunday after Sunday. "My attitude is necessary for that. Football is my everything. I've got no time or place for anything else. It's hard for anything to interfere with my football. The world could end, I guess, and

I'd still be playing. Playing, and working to do better."

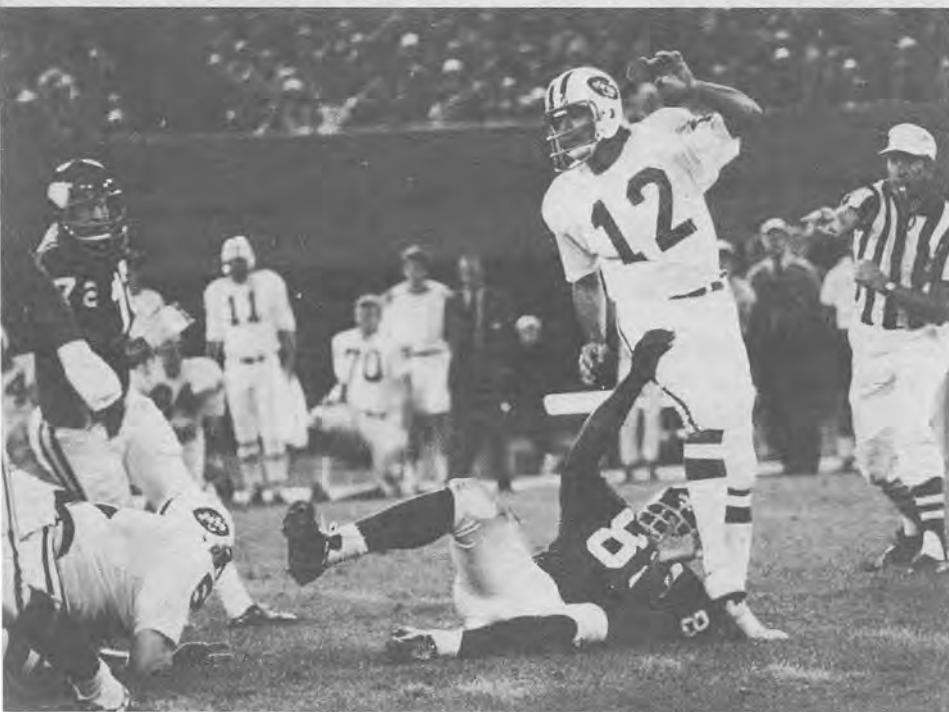
The Viking stalwart's hard work has paid off. He is generally regarded as the best in the 26-team NFL at his position. Two years ago the mountainous end helped his team win the NFL title although it was upset by Kansas City of the AFL in the Super Bowl game. Last season, Minnesota captured the Central Division championship before being beaten by San Francisco in a post-season playoff game.

The Central Division, which also includes the improved Detroit Lions, Chicago Bears and Green Bay Packers, the latter under new coach Dan Devine of the University of Missouri, is often referred to as the "Black and Blue





Eller (81) tackles Mel Farr (24) of Detroit (above) while Alan Page (88) hassles Joe Namath (12, below). Other members of the Vikings' front four include Jim Marshall and Gary Larsen. "Self-discipline has a lot to do with their success," notes Viking coach Bud Grant.



League." Eller believes it is an appropriate title. "It's the nature of the teams," he explains. "The Lions, Bears and Packers are physical teams and so are the Vikings. We rely on personnel, on sound fundamentals and a sound approach to the game. I think it has a lot to do with the coaching, the kind that was established in this division by Vince Lombardi, George Halas and Bud Grant.

"Defenses are primary and when that's the case you're going to have a lot of tough going. It makes a difference because we all play each other twice and they're hard games. You'll find these

teams tougher defensively than any others. Whenever you play in a division with three other teams that don't give up many points it's kind of tough."

Eller always has been tough, but in his early years as a professional (although it is rather difficult to believe now), he was not as aggressive as he should have been. At least, his first pro coach, Norm Van Brocklin, thought so. "Eller needs to be more aggressive," Van Brocklin said. "When he stretches out and gets after people, nobody can hold him. But when he doesn't, he's just another guy."

The big Viking felt otherwise. "It takes a couple of years for a defensive lineman to mature, to adjust," he explained. He adjusted quickly. Viking fans figure there isn't a quarterback Eller can't get to. They call him the Secretary of Defense. Carl's "secret" is his first move. "I try to get the offensive tackle off balance on my first move," he points out. "Actually, there are three moves involved with the man I work against. He reacts to my reaction and then I have to react to his. Sometimes, I try to get by him with quickness and sometimes with strength."

The Kansas City Chiefs pose a particular problem to the Vikings' defensive ace. "Len Dawson doesn't stand still," he says, referring to the Chiefs' star quarterback. "His pass protectors move with him all the time. Any time you have a quarterback who moves, you have to adjust your pass rush. The Chiefs don't really have a passing down. What I mean is you can come up to a down that would be a passing down with any other team and they may not be passing. The Chiefs run a lot of downs, say, third and eight, when another club would almost certainly be passing.

"If I come up to a passing down, there are certain things I can do. I can disregard the trap play. I can disregard the sweep. But the Chiefs' offense means I have to play pretty much the same way all the time. I figure that gives them something of an advantage because they know how I'm going to be playing. If I knew it was going to be a passing down, I would have an advantage because I would be pretty sure what they were doing."

Eller, who admits to having been a disciplinary problem in high school, is a real student of the game. "Certain techniques are good against only some players and not against others. You try many techniques during a game against the player opposite you and through the game you eliminate some things that just don't work."

The other members of the Vikings' defensive front four are Jim Marshall, Gary Larsen and Alan Page. "We feel they should be about at their potential," says Bud Grant, the Vikings' coach. "The big men in football don't grow up until they are in their late 20s and into their 30s." Larsen is 31, Marshall 33 and Page only 26.

"Self-discipline has had a lot to do with their success," Grant explains. "Before, the boys tended to try to do it all by themselves. If one fellow thought he had a chance for a big play, he might leave his primary assignment and try to make it. Now, they have seen the value of working as a disciplined unit. It could be our front four is not finished developing and may improve even more."

Eller is seeking to improve all the

time and uses every weapon, psychological and otherwise, to do his job. Needling an opponent can be effective, he says. "To needle a guy," he points out, "you have to have a good book on him. You have to know his personality, how he reacts to something like that. It may make him play better. I once read an article on Daryle Lamonica (the Oakland quarterback), and he said he thinks he is the best quarterback in football. You've got something to work with there. Certainly, if I have something to stir a guy up with, I use it."

Still, Carl Eller doesn't get himself so stirred up that he can't perform effectively. "Really, I never get angry at an opponent," he discloses. "Anger doesn't make you play a better game." He admits to being a loner. He tried a year of marriage, but it didn't work out well.

Eller didn't have to claw his way out of the ghetto. He was born in Winston-Salem in 1942. He wasn't well off. "But though we were poor," he remembers, "it was a question of not knowing it, since we were just like everyone else." His father worked as a cement finisher for his grandfather and was regularly employed until he died in 1955. Carl also didn't have to fight for attention from his parents. He was an only child—and a big kid. Right from the beginning he knew that football was going to be his sport. He played sandlot ball until his sophomore year in high school, by which time he stood 6-4 and weighed over 200 pounds. University of Minnesota scouts came around to Winston-Salem when Carl was picked to the High School All-America team in 1960. He enrolled at Minnesota and in his first year with the Gophers he went with them to the Rose Bowl where they beat UCLA.

Eller enjoyed his stay in college but he does not agree now with the educators who want to de-emphasize football and also raise the scholastic entrance requirements for athletic scholarships. "Why won't the professors and college officials consider pro football a profession just like they do medicine, law, engineering and business?" he asks. "If it wasn't for athletic scholarships I would never have been able to afford tuition to attend college. I'd probably be working as a laborer in Winston-Salem for \$100 a week or less. I attended a segregated school in Winston-Salem. I'm sure the education we received didn't measure up to the standards in the north. So when it came time to take the entrance exams, I wasn't as qualified as a student who attended a high school in Minnesota."

"Fortunately," he adds, "I had a C minus average which was good enough for a scholarship at Minnesota. When I was in high school, the southern colleges weren't playing black athletes. I was limited to northern schools. I feel that I



"I enjoy making a play in the face of odds," says Eller. "My state of mind is the newest thing about me. Not because of my accomplishments, but because I know now that I can meet any challenge, whatever it may be."

started out at a higher salary in pro football in my rookie year than a graduate in law, engineering or some other professional school students do in their first year. Also, while playing football, I can save money to help me get into business when I retire. At the same time, I also make a lot of contacts and meet a number of people who can offer me a job that is as good as any other graduate of the university can wind up with seven or eight years after he is out of college. For the black athlete, college and pro football are even more important. The black athlete gets an opportunity to move up the ladder faster with a football background than he would had he not played. I don't know where I would be today had I not been given the opportunity to play."

The Vikings are now playing their second season without Joe Kapp, the colorful and aggressive quarterback most often given the credit for leading the team to the NFL crown in 1969. Gary Cuozzo, who took Kapp's place last season, and Norm Snead, obtained from Philadelphia the past off-season, are directing the club's attack. "It's probably a misconception that Kapp was our spiritual leader," Eller points out. "He added to our team and exemplified sort of what we stood for as a team, but I don't think we ever had one figurehead that responsibility laid upon. At any time it might be different players who spark a certain amount of emotion. It's kind of hard to expect one player to give that to you. I think we have a lot of leaders."

"Jim Marshall is probably a great example of what we like to be because he's the kind of guy that's always ready to play. He's always going to play his best game regardless of what his injuries

might be. This sort of personifies the whole spirit of the team. Kapp, being the quarterback and the type of quarterback he was, certainly drew more attention to himself. I think what happened was that the spirit of the team moved into the position of quarterback and Joe sort of represented the type of team we are and the type of image we have. Cuozzo is not the rough, brawny and wild and fiery type. We had to adjust to him and give him the confidence of knowing he's not alone."

The Minnesota team is a disciplined, immaculately-coached machine under Bud Grant's tight control. On the road all players eat their meals together. Nobody smokes on the player bus or in the



locker room. Every defensive play is sent in from the sideline. Eller's roaming on the field in pursuit of the quarterback is disciplined, too. He moves on the quarterback in a determined straight line that sheds blockers, sometimes two, sometimes even three. The number of men in front of Carl does not deter him. In a way it spurs him on. "I enjoy making the play in the face of odds," he says. "My state of mind is the newest thing about me. Not because of my accomplishments, but because I now know I can meet any challenge, whatever it might be."

Eller has the trademark one sees stamped on the brows of many pro football players. A tiny lump grows dead center on his forehead where the helmet presses too tightly against the bone of the brow. He lives well. He owns a Cadillac limousine and a five-bedroom house in northern Minneapolis. He has earned it all. "I look at it this way," he says, "the quarterback has the talent and I have talent. It's just a mat-

(Continued on page 72)

A pixie-like manager who contends no two men can be treated alike and a carefully thought out blending of youth and maturity have turned the once sullen Bucs into baseball's merriest crew.

Specially Written for All-Star Sports
By Charley Feeney
Sports Reporter—Pittsburgh *Post-Gazette*

THE Pittsburgh Pirates sat silently on their chartered bus outside of Wrigley Field in Chicago. They had just lost a tough one to the Chicago Cubs.

Mudcat Grant, after hurling four scoreless innings in relief, had given up a 12th inning homer to Joe Pepitone for a 1-0 Chicago victory.

Danny Murtaugh, the Pirates' manager, sat on the front seat on the right side

Dock Ellis was 14-3 at mid-season (including 12 straight wins) and started against Vida Blue in All-Star game.

Four-time NL batting champion Roberto Clemente complements the good, young players on the Bucs.

THE PIRATE FORMULA— HOW IT WORKS



Slugger Willie Stargell reached super star status with an incredible first half this season. At the All-Star break, he already had 30 home runs and 87 runs batted in.



of the bus. In a few minutes the bus would take the Pirates to Midway Airport for a trip to St. Louis.

Grant was the last player to board the bus. As he stepped aboard, Murtaugh said:

"Nice goin' Mud, good job."

Danny Murtaugh was serious. He wanted Mudcat Grant, a 35-year-old relief pitcher and a member of seven clubs before he joined the Pirates, to know that he had done a good job. Anytime a relief pitcher throws four scoreless innings he is doing a good job.

Murtaugh didn't complain about the pitch to Pepitone which beat the Pirates.

Later, on the plane which was taking the Pirates to St. Louis, Grant was talking about Murtaugh.

"That man is one fine person and a wonderful manager," Grant said. "He knows how to handle people."

Anytime a pitcher, after throwing a home run ball, receives a compliment from his manager it's got to be something special.

But Murtaugh, who looks much older

than his 53 years, doesn't think he is something special. He is a baseball man who grew up in Chester, Pa., and has battled back from a heart condition to take charge of a club that once was considered a team cluttered with "bad guys."

Murtaugh, who managed the Pirates to their lone world championship (1960) in 44 years, has been the clue in the well-knit Pirates who loom as one of the strongest clubs in the majors.

It is no longer a ball club that can win only when Roberto Clemente is batting .330 and over. It is no longer a ball club that will fold if it loses Willie Stargell's home run bat because of an injury.

The Pirates are a team of youth. In the past three seasons, the Pirates have unveiled good, young ball players in bunches.

There's Bob Robertson, a right-handed hitting first baseman whose home-run bat produced 27 circuits in 390 at bats in 1970.

There's Richie Hebner, a one-time hockey player, who is a sweet-swinging

left-handed hitting third baseman. There's Al Oliver, a former first baseman, converted into a center fielder. There's Manny Sanguillen, a Panamanian catcher who rates just behind Johnny Bench.

There's Dave Cash, a young second baseman who proved how good he is when he won the job held by Bill Mazeroski for 16 years.

Robertson . . . Hebner . . . Oliver . . . Sanguillen . . . Cash . . . Would you believe that in a year or so all of them could be part of the National League All-Star team.

Sanguillen is the old man of the bunch. He's 26.

Dock Ellis, a Pirate farm product, is 26 and has established himself as one of the best pitchers in the majors.

Bob Moose, only 23, has been a Buc for four years and someday he figures to win big.

Steve Blass, an old goat because he will be 30 years old in April, 1972, remains young because he rubs backs with the real young 'uns.

Luke Walker, 26, has a left arm that

throws the best breaking stuff in the league, according to his ex-manager Larry Shepard.

These are the young Bucs who jell with the old Bucs who feature Clemente and Stargell on the attack and Murtaugh and his Irish kisser in the dugout.

Murtaugh doesn't treat each player the same.

"Each player has a different temperament," he says. "We have certain rules on this club and everybody abides by them—or else it costs them. But this doesn't mean that a manager can treat every player as if he is a number.

Richie Hebner is probably the most high strung of the Baby Bucs. His temper is more under control now than it was in the minors a few years ago.

Hebner struck out and banged his right fist against the cement wall in the dugout. Result: One broken hand.

Hebner still breaks bats when he strikes out. He still curses within earshot of fans in box seats.

Then there is Hebner's other side. He is quick to sign autographs. Eager to make public appearances for charity.

The youngsters in Pittsburgh like Hebner because, despite his displays of temper and curse words which would disturb a longshoreman, he indicates to the kids that he likes them.

Robertson, Hebner's roommate on the road, has been known to brood. It disturbs him when he is benched against certain right-handed pitchers.

The big redhead from Mt. Savage, Md., will strike out 100 times this season. He also will hit his share of home runs. He looks upon every pitcher as his enemy. He looks to the day when he ranks with Stargell as a home run slugger. He looks to the day when he will get paid like a certified home-run slugger. It is not far off.

Oliver once was an unhappy Buc. He once publicly asked to be traded because he said: "I can never hit .300 playing in Pittsburgh."

Oliver felt he won the first base job after a solid rookie year in 1969. Larry Shepard was the Pittsburgh manager then.

The following year, Oliver got off slowly and he found that he had lost his first base job to Robertson. When Oliver played, he subbed in left field for Stargell and in right field for Clemente and he also filled in for Robertson at first base.

"I want one position," Oliver pleaded.

It's rare for a ball player to get what he wants in the terms of position. But Pittsburgh General Manager Joe Brown recognized Oliver's potential and Brown told Oliver if he could prove he could play center field in winter ball, there would be a steady job for him in Pittsburgh.

Oliver played for the San Juan Sena-



tors, managed by Roberto Clemente. It was Clemente who told Brown that Oliver could play center field. The next move was up to Brown. He traded Matty Alou, a 200-hit man a season, to St. Louis. Oliver became the Bucs' regular center fielder.

He was happy in a Pittsburgh uniform.

In the Pirates' clubhouse, Sanguillen is ready to fight anybody. It's all a joke. There isn't a summer day that goes by that Sanguillen isn't being needled by one of his teammates.

Stargell will charge up to Sanguillen.

"Put up your dukes, I'm gonna whip you," Stargell will say.

Sanguillen, who fought a half dozen amateur bouts in Panama, will go into a fighting pose.

"I'm ready for you," he will say to Stargell.

"You're chicken," Stargell will needle.

"No chicken," Sanguillen will say.

Stargell generally breaks up. Other Bucs join in. They tell Sanguillen he was lucky that Stargell didn't throw a punch.

"I'm ready for him," Sanguillen says, his bright white teeth showing that he

enjoys the needling.

Cash, who turned 23 during the 1971 season, might be the most mature among the Baby Bucs.

He gives indication that he knows more about the inside of the game than any of the others.

Cash, who grew up in Utica, N.Y., has been a baseball fan since he was six-years-old. He used to bus it from Utica with his mother to old Ebbets Field in Brooklyn. He was a Jackie Robinson fan.

Many of the older Bucs never saw Robinson play baseball.

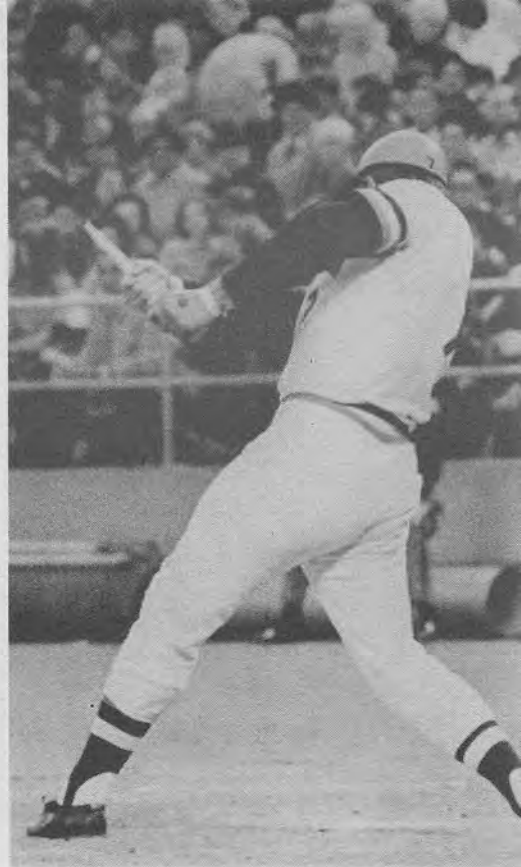
Cash's job as the successor to Mazerowski is a tough one. Cash knows he always will be compared to Maz and he knows that in the comparison he often will come out second best.

"It doesn't bother me," Cash says. "Maybe someday a young kid will take my job and maybe he will be compared to me."

It's quite possible.

It could be that Cash may not always be a second baseman. Gene Alley, just past 30, hints at an early retirement which might force Murtaugh to try Cash at shortstop.

Then who would play second base?



Bob Robertson strikes out a lot but hits his share out of the park (27 in 1970). He looks to day when he'll be ranked with Stargell.

The Pirates are happy, loose, confident and talented. It all adds up to a winning club. At L., top, a jubilant Dave Giusti jumped into the arms of first baseman Bob Robertson after the Bucs clinched Eastern Division in 1970. Below, catcher Manny Sanguillen makes a good play to put out Mets' Don Hahn (25) at home. At R., bottom, third baseman Rich Hebner makes lunging catch.





That's easy. That ever-producing Pittsburgh farm system has a young Panamanian named Renaldo Stennett playing second base at Charleston, W. Va., in the International League.

Stennett is a miniature Clemente with the bat. He also swings with his left foot in the bucket like Al Simmons. Stennett doesn't look like a hitter. All he has done anywhere he goes is lead the league in hitting.

Besides Murtaugh's leadership, there is another Pirate who has molded the club into a winner.

He is Dave Giusti, formerly of Houston and St. Louis and now a quality relief pitcher.

When the Pirates obtained Giusti from the Cardinals for utility man Carl Taylor, they never realized how valuable this stocky right-hander was going to be.

Giusti never suspected it, either. He had hopes of breaking into the Pittsburgh starting rotation. There always has been a shortage of pitching talent wearing Pirate uniforms.

Giusti, in his first spring with the Bucs in 1970, didn't look like he'd be much help to the staff.

"I couldn't get anybody out and I began to worry," he said.

When the 1969 season opened, Dave Giusti was the No. 10 man on a 10-man staff. By late May, he was the ace of the bullpen.

"I never thought I'd become accustomed to bullpen work," Giusti said.

Bucs' 23-year-old second baseman Dave Cash (30 L., above) keeps Reds' Dave Concepcion from falling on him during a double play. Below, manager Danny Murtaugh sticks up for Stargell, who was ruled out in a rundown.



"But now I like it. I know what Murtaugh expects of me. I know I'm not going to be called into a ball game before the seventh inning."

Giusti is the Pirates' player representative. He also heads the clubhouse needling committee and its targets don't exclude anybody.

"Clementine," Giusti will call Roberto Clemente. "You're not so good. I've seen a lot of balls go over your head. How come those fans in the seats can catch those home run balls and you can't? Some super star."

Clemente has been known to be moody. He also can have fun. Clemente likes Giusti. He will take Giusti's needle and jab him back.

When the needling in the clubhouse is going on, Murtaugh often sits in his rocking chair in his private office.

He rocks and sometimes dozes before a game. He does not expect the clubhouse to be quiet to allow him a few winks before he must take part in the strategy of a baseball game.

"If the clubhouse was quiet," Murtaugh says, "then I might think something's wrong. Let them make as much noise as they want. The noisier they are, the happier they are."

A few years ago, happiness in a Pittsburgh clubhouse was a rare thing. All that has changed now. No one man has changed it. It has taken a mixture of old Bucs and young Bucs.

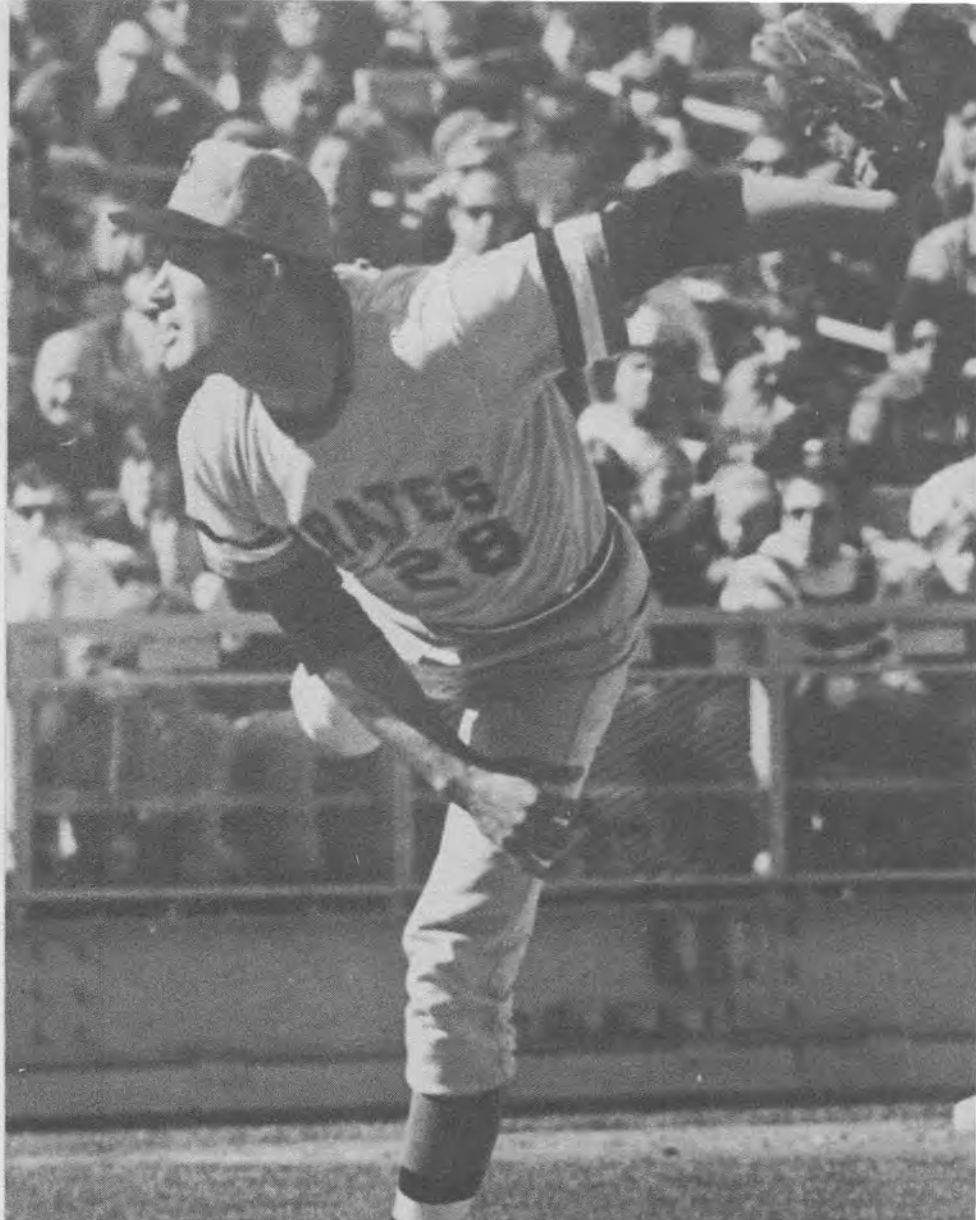
It has taken a fellow like Jose Pagan, always a good guy on a team, to show the way to the other subs. Youngsters like Gene Clines and Milt May and Charlie Sands would like to play regularly. But they don't gripe about it.

Jackie Hernandez would like to play more shortstop and Vic Davalillo, a super sub like Pagan, might prefer to play more.

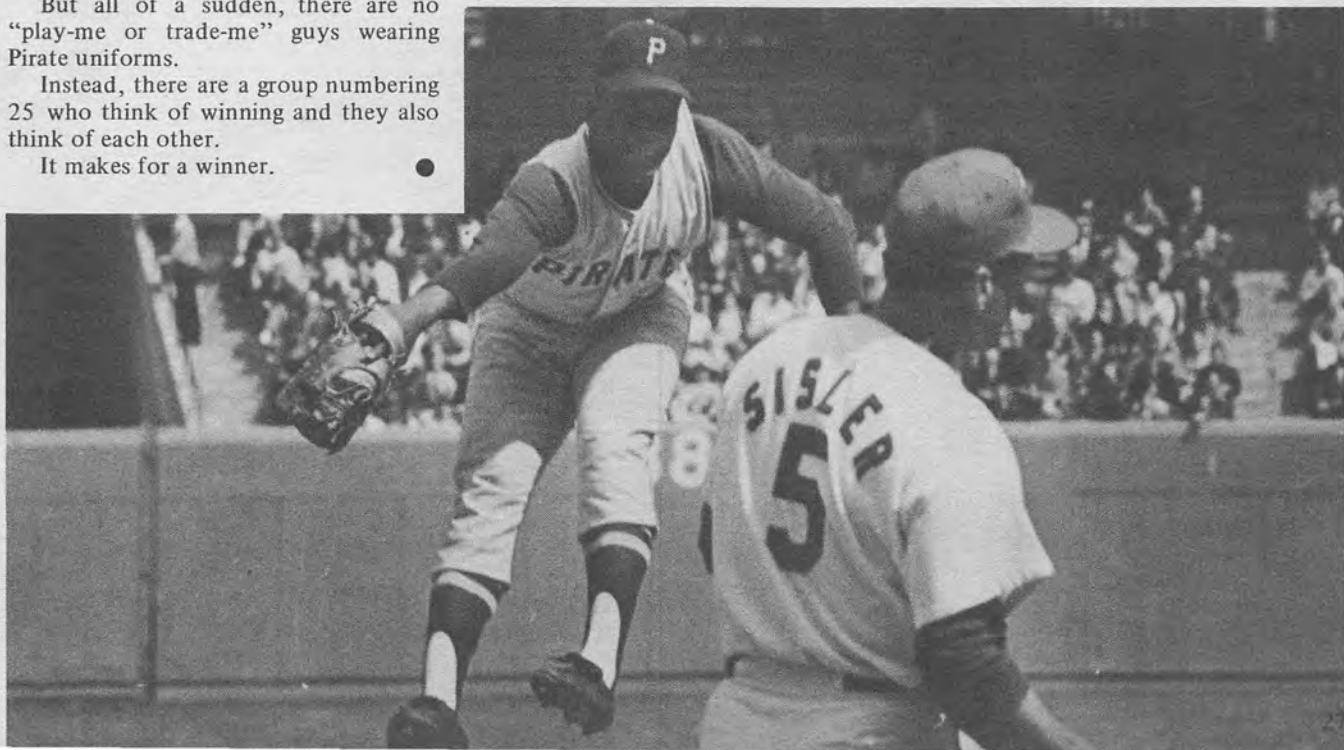
But all of a sudden, there are no "play-me or trade-me" guys wearing Pirate uniforms.

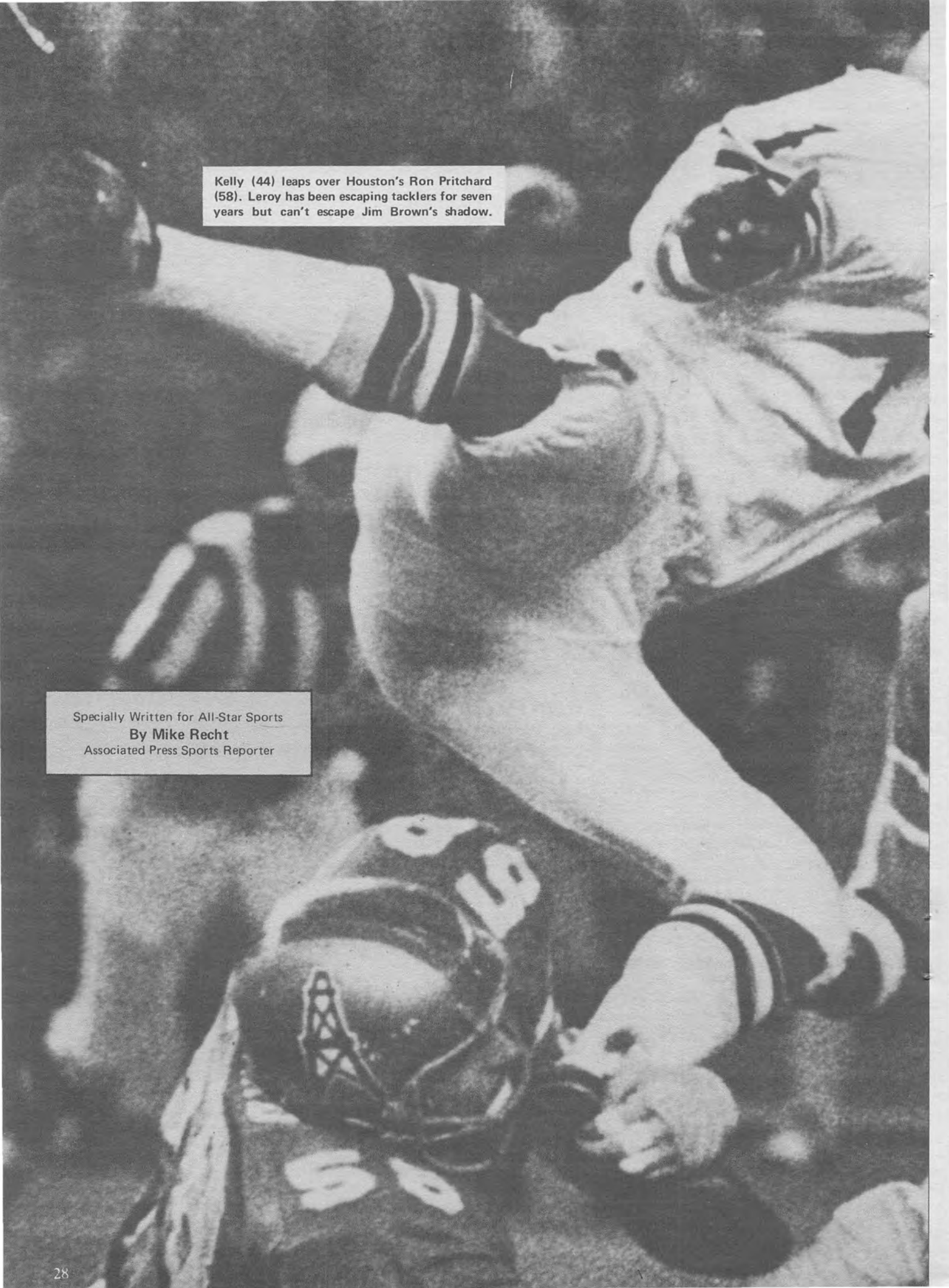
Instead, there are a group numbering 25 who think of winning and they also think of each other.

It makes for a winner. ●




Steve Blass (above), one of the older "young" Pirates at 30, was 10-3 at mid-season and shooting to better his top effort of 18-6, accomplished during the 1968 season. Below, Al Oliver made a leaping stab while playing first base. He is now Bucs' "happy" center fielder.





Kelly (44) leaps over Houston's Ron Pritchard (58). Leroy has been escaping tacklers for seven years but can't escape Jim Brown's shadow.

Specially Written for All-Star Sports
By Mike Recht
Associated Press Sports Reporter



A deeply moving letter to a hero-worshipping first grader gives a vital clue as to how the Browns' star is waging the good fight.

Inside Leroy Kelly's SECRET BATTLE

IT WAS a shattering blow. Jim Brown had just completed another great season; he still was in his prime, still healthy.

Then, just before the start of the 1966 season, Jim Brown stunned the pro football world by suddenly retiring.

Football had lost the greatest runner in its history, and the Browns had lost their offense. For nine years he had carried their attack on his broad shoulders.

Yet Coach Blanton Collier, like Brown in his prime, never broke stride. "I expect someone from this squad to make a name for himself," he said simply, perhaps optimistically, or naively, or more likely, confidently.

It's obvious now that Collier already had that someone in mind, and there also is little doubt that he proved a prophet. Leroy Kelly indeed has made a name for himself in pro football.

Kelly has broken loose from the pack and emerged as one of the great backs in the game. It is only his misfortune that he must be compared with the man he replaced, his misfortune that man was pro football's greatest ball carrier. No one tries to compare Gale Sayers to Brown. But Kelly has lived in Brown's shadow since he first stepped into the Cleveland backfield as a regular in 1966.

Although he has been running to daylight for five years now, breaking tackles, breaking loose for 57 touchdowns, he still is trying to break away from the shadow of Brown.

All this despite the fact that Leroy Kelly, if he had not had to play his first two seasons as a pro behind Brown and the last two years with injuries, might well have a shot at matching Brown's record statistics. Leroy Kelly might well be as good as Jim Brown.

Kelly ranks 10th on the all-time rushing list and is tops among active players with 5,209 yards in seven NFL campaigns. But he can't come close to Brown who gained 12,312.



Although he weighs some 15 pounds less than Brown's 220, Kelly has one of the quickest starts in football with the power to run over a defensive back and the speed to outrun one.

"Leroy is like a cat," says Ernie Green, now a scout for the Browns after running in the backfield first with Brown and then with Kelly. "So was Jim, only a bigger cat. It's difficult to knock a cat off his feet.

"Kelly is agile and has great balance. He might not have Jim's strength so he compensates in other ways. He moves more, slides around and fakes more and sidesteps tacklers."

Opposing players appreciate him even more, having had to tackle him—or try to.

"When I played at New York he always was the best against us," says linebacker Ken Avery, now with the Cincinnati Bengals.

Cincinnati teammate Bill Bergey agreed Kelly is "so hard to tackle because you can't get his legs at the same time. They seem to be going in different directions. He just has unique moves."

"Leroy can cut on a dime," Avery adds. "He breaks tackles like Jim Brown. You think you have him, but you can't get a solid lick at him.

Kelly, loosening up during practice, has been hobbled by injuries last two seasons.



Kelly goes over the top for short yardage against Oakland as Ben Davidson (83) and Carleton Oats (85) make stop. "We saw a few new defenses," Leroy said of '70 season.

"He's also a great receiver, and if you stop him 15 straight times, he'll go all the way on the 16th."

"Leroy is a perfectly proportioned 205 pounds," says Dub Jones, the man who first felt the Browns would not collapse without Jim Brown and Kelly as a replacement.

Jones, a former Cleveland great who was a backfield coach at the time with the Browns, tagged Kelly as a future star even before Brown decided to quit.

"I'd be willing to match Leroy's potential with any back coming out of college," he said, and those included such highly-touted collegians as Donnie Anderson and Jim Grabowski. Kelly has long outdistanced both of them.

"He's way above average," Jones said. "He eventually might become a super star. He has a fine sense of timing and balance. He doesn't get knocked down easily, and he has that burst of speed to break away from a tackler."

Kelly certainly didn't disappoint Jones, Collier or the Browns. He gained 1,141 yards his first season as a starter, and he went over the 1,000 mark the next two years as the top rusher in the National Football League.

By the end of the 1970 season, Kelly had moved into 10th spot on the all time rushing list, tops among the active

players with 5,209 yards on 1,137 attempts for a very respectable 4.6 average per carry. His seven seasons also were the lowest number of years played by anyone in the first 10.

Brown is the distant leader at 12,312 yards in nine years for a 5.2 average and 106 touchdowns, seemingly unbreakable marks. But statistics can't tell the whole story.

Kelly, at age 28, can still have some five productive years left, if he stays healthy. And five productive years could net him close to another 5,000 yards on the ground.

But Kelly encountered several obstacles with which Jim Brown never had to contend. For example, Brown never had to play behind Jim Brown for two seasons, as Kelly did.

When Kelly came out of Morgan State College in Baltimore, he had to content himself with running back kick-offs and punts for the Browns, and he managed to lead the league in punt returns in 1965.

Brown, fortunately, also never had to contend with hobbling injuries, the kind that have nagged and slowed Kelly the past two seasons and held down his yardage to 817 in 1969 and 656 last season.

"A lot of it certainly is luck," Kelly





"My main goal is to stay healthy the whole season," said Kelly (below) to reporters.



says about avoiding injuries. "Good physical condition helps, of course. Jim liked to do a lot of running before the start of a game. I have my own style. I just like to break a sweat."

Kelly's luck held his first four years as Brown's replacement when he showed remarkable durability, missing only one play because of a dislocated finger and two other plays when he lost his shoe. He was carrying the ball more than 200 times a season, too, the target of tacklers some 1,300 times in six years.

But a pulled leg muscle in the opening game of the 1969 season kept him below par for the first four games.

"You can keep on playing with some injuries, but a runner can't afford to have anything happen to his legs," he said. "The leg bothered me until the fifth game."

The following season, 1970, proved more disappointing. It was Cleveland's first year in the new American Conference composed mostly of former American Football League clubs, and the Browns naturally wanted to show their former rivals how good they were. Kelly's own pride also was involved. Although it was a new alignment, he suddenly became the top rusher in the conference, having gained 4,553 yards by then.

"My main goal is to stay healthy the whole season," he said in training camp. But it wasn't to be. In fact, it was worse than the previous season.

First, there was a severe ankle sprain that took an extra long time to heal. That was followed by a bruise on the other ankle, then a pulled Achilles tendon and finally a pulled hamstring muscle.

Even when he was able to play on Sunday he wasn't able to work with the team during the week, and that hurt his timing and conditioning. Instead, he was in the trainer's room four times a day, 15 minutes each time, soaking his ankle in ice water to put down the swelling.

"Injuries cut his practice time and that hurts a runner," Collier said. "I remember how Jim Brown used to tell me how he liked to run into the line in practice. He said that's how he got the feel of things and prepared himself."

Nick Skorich, who replaced Collier as head coach this season after serving as the offensive line coach, felt the injuries affected Kelly's quick moves when openings occur on the line.

"He hasn't been better than 80 per cent physically most of the season," he said.

It turned out to be a lost season for Kelly, although he and Bo Scott still gave the Browns one of the top 1-2 rushing combinations in the AFC, along with Oakland's Hewitt Dixon and Charley Smith and Larry Csonka and Jim Kiick of Miami.



Bo Scott and Kelly give the Browns one of NFL's best one-two rushing combinations.

"With the new conference and the disappointment of 1969, I went into the season very enthusiastic," he said. "But I felt really good for only three games. I couldn't cut and I didn't feel loose—and a running back has to feel loose."

But Kelly managed to look at the bright side, if there was one, pointing out that a number of running backs were hurt much more seriously last season. "At least I didn't have any broken bones that required an operation," he said.

Although it has only been six years since Brown last carried the ball for the Browns, he was not facing the defenses that Kelly now runs against. There have been many changes, greater perfection and intricacy that makes it more and more difficult for offensive linemen and runners.

"We saw a number of new defenses," Kelly said of the 1970 season, "and they caused some blocking problems. We haven't played against many of these teams before and it takes a while to adapt."

"We face a number of odd man defenses and they gave us some trouble. But we'll straighten it out. We can run against any team."

At least one opposing coach, Bud Grant, of Minnesota knows what Kelly is talking about after watching the Browns' ground game with Kelly.

"They don't care what the weather is, or the score," he said. "They just give the ball to Kelly and you'd better look out because here they come."

Grant was talking mostly about the sweep, Cleveland's bread-and-butter

(Continued on page 56)

Dave McNally ALL HE DOES IS

They called him "McLucky." Don't you believe it. If you want to know how a hurler with just an average fast ball, a fair curve and no "out" pitch does it, just ask Oriole backstop Andy Etchebarren.

THE WORLD champion Baltimore Orioles aren't above having nicknames like players in the rest of the league. John Powell has been "Boog" since he outgrew his first pair of short pants. Paul Blair is called "Motor Mouth" for obvious reasons just as reed-thin Mark Belanger naturally was tagged "The Blade."

Dave McNally carries the alias "Dave McLucky," a pseudonym dating back to 1969 when the stocky southpaw was in the process of tying an American League record with 17 straight victories.

Only a few wins in this streak could be regarded as classic pitching performances. Many of them were high-run affairs in which the rival batters hit a number of screaming liners that seemed to be drawn by magnets into Oriole gloves. If you believe the bench jockeys, Brooks Robinson needed smelling salts several times after grabbing cannon shots off McNally offerings.

It was Oriole general manager Harry Dalton who good-naturedly dubbed the pitcher "Dave McLucky" during this streak and the name stuck like glue.

But the nickname is as misleading as calling Wilt Chamberlain "Shorty," Bob Hayes "Snail" or Billy Martin "Mr. Peepers."

For the truth is that McNally has been the premiere pitcher in the American League the past three years. In this period, he compiled a stunning 66-26 record. No one, not Bob Gibson, Juan Marichal or even fabled Denny McLain, won as many games. McNally has been good and lucky, but mostly just plain good.

No pitcher has displayed the consistency of the 28-year-old lefty who appears well on the way to his fourth straight 20-game season.

Last year, he became the first AL hurler to put together three straight 20-game seasons since Bob Lemon pulled the trick for the Indians in 1953-54-55. If McNally wins 20 or more



"Every time I go out there," says McNally, "I think I have the necessary pitches and control to get the batters out consistently." At L. Birds' manager Earl Weaver jokes with his big three (L. to R.)—Jim Palmer, McNally and Mike Cuellar, who are all shooting for 20 victories again.

again this season, he'll be the first to accomplish this feat since Red Ruffing did it for the Yankees in 1936-39.

If you're not a faithful Bird watcher and catch McNally's act only a few times a season, it might be hard understanding his great success. His fast ball pales in comparison to teammate Jim Palmer's and would probably be lapped by Sam McDowell's high hard one. His curve hardly reminds you of Camilo Pascual and his assortment of pitches will never seriously challenge the repertoire

of Juan Marichal. McNally also lacks a freak "out" pitch like Mike Cuellar's classic "scroogie."

But the unassuming native of Billings, Montana has the simple knack of getting the hitters out and the intestinal fortitude to pitch just good enough to win, whether by a 6-5 or 2-1 margin.

Perhaps the best illustration of McNally's special brand of courage came this season when he won a dozen games the first three months despite a painful sore elbow.

WIN

Specially Written for All-Star Sports
By Alan Goldstein
Sports Reporter—Baltimore *Sun*



The discomfort didn't cause him to miss a single turn on the mound. In fact, the malady was a well-kept secret by the Birds until word leaked out that the gutty southpaw was receiving shots of an anti-inflammatory agent called "Kenalog" which is slightly less potent than cortisone.

After beating the Senators, 6-1, for win No. 12, McNally revealed his elbow troubles but said the pain was now disappearing.

"My stuff was a lot better, all my pitches," he said. "The velocity was good, too. My control in and out was a





"McNally has more guts than any person in the world," says catcher Andy Etchebarren (above) about Dave (below), who won 12 games in first three months of 1971 despite a painful elbow.

little off, but the fast ball was harder than it's been lately. It was moving enough, and the curve and slider were working good, too.

"I still think I can throw better," he added, "but I was still much improved over my last five or six times out. It's like Jim Merritt (Cincinnati southpaw) always said: 'Pitching is science and footwork—90 percent footwork.'

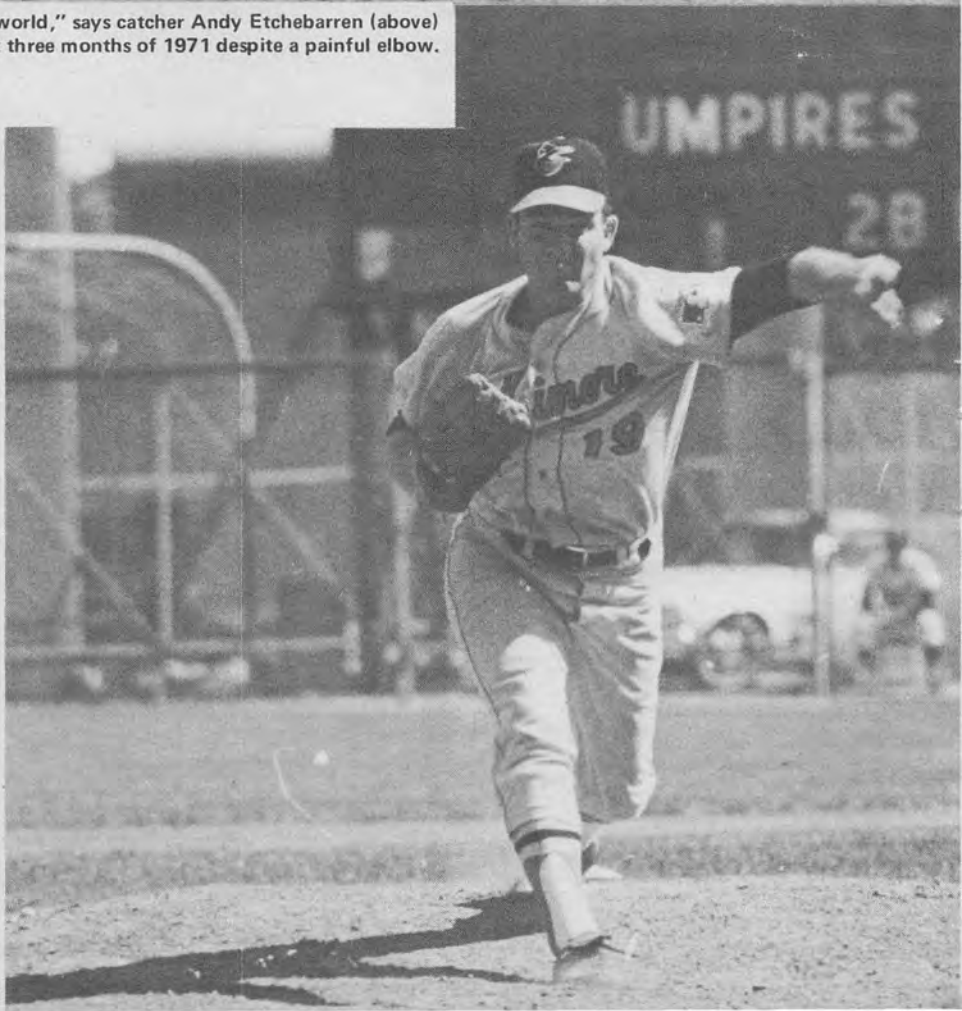
"That's about what it's been for me lately," Dave cracked. "A lot of runs, a lot of relief pitching and a lot of at 'em balls."

McNally, who has a lot of the blarney in him, would like to perpetuate the "McLucky myth." But his teammates and the Oriole management, which rewarded him with an \$85,000 contract, know better.

As batterymate Andy Etchebarren puts it: "Dave is just a great, super person. He's got more guts than any person in the world. That's my feeling.

"Dave will go out there and pitch when he's got nothing and still win ball games," the beetle-browed catcher added. "Some pitchers don't want to pitch if they don't have their good stuff. But Mac will go out there and work until he gets his good stuff back. He never gives in."

Veteran Oriole coach Billy Hunter



paid McNally an even better compliment when he compared him to Whitey Ford, the former Yankee southpaw who was regarded as the American League's premiere pitcher in the fifties and early sixties.

"McNally reminds me more and more of Ford every year," said Hunter. "He's got good stuff, but concentration is the thing that really makes him outstanding, just like it was with Whitey.

"When something has to be done, he just shuts everything else out and goes and does it. I can't think of a single pitcher who has more concentration on the mound than Mac.

"Nothing keeps him from doing his job. If they start to hit him or he gets a bad break, or we make a couple of errors behind him, he just concentrates on the next guy and gives the very best he's got. That's why he's so tough to beat."

Caught in a rare serious mood, McNally will admit that more than luck has made him the American League's most consistent winner.

"Here's what I think," he says frankly. "I feel everytime I go out there, I

can get them out. Don't get me wrong, I don't overpower many guys and I certainly don't have an unhittable curve. But, as I said, everytime I go out there, I think I have the necessary pitches and the control to get the batters out."

It hasn't always been that way for McNally who had only two winning years his first five full seasons with Baltimore.

"Before 1966, I just didn't know how to pitch," he confesses. "I'd go out there those first few years, get them out on a sinker and say 'Yeah, I gotta throw sinkers all the time!' Next time out, wham!

"Still, I think I was a lot better pitcher in '66 than my record (13-6) shows. I pitched all year to a 2.80 earned run average, but got bombed my last two starts and that brought it up to 3.20.

"But, I remember all the Oriole pitchers got hauled out of 2-2 and 1-1 games in the sixth inning that year. We had Stu Miller and a couple of other good relievers and Hank Bauer wouldn't hesitate to pinch-hit for you."

Mac, however, quickly acknowledges the fact that he has matured into a complete pitcher, using his head as well as his arm.

"In 1966, I just had the fast ball, curve and sinker," he said, "and when I wasn't getting the curve over, I was strictly a one-pitch pitcher.

"But the fast ball just wasn't that good and never will be," Dave said. "I'm not a hard thrower. I've got to have two or maybe three pitches that I get over the plate. My slider was my 'out' pitch two years ago.

"But the main difference now is control. That's why I prefer pitching every fourth day. When I work every fifth day, there's a two-day gap between when I throw on the sidelines and when I pitch. I feel too strong, and when that happens, my control gets bad. I've got to go out there as often as I can to keep my control sharp."

Dave would have preferred not pitching at all in 1967 when arm miseries resulted in him finishing with a 7-7 record. But he bounced back in 1968 to

(Continued on page 66)

McNally picked up his uniform in team's dressing room prior to 1970 World Series against the Reds. At L. Dave went the distance in the third game to defeat Cincinnati, 9-3, helping his own cause with a grand slam—first by a pitcher in Series' play—off Wayne Granger in fifth.



Specially Written for All-Star Sports

By Ken McNichols

Nationally Known Sports Authority

BRUCE (THE BOOMER) Gossett, the San Francisco 49ers' cherished kicker, is nearsighted enough that he always wears glasses—except when kicking.

But he's also foresighted enough to have three lucrative careers going for him.

For several years he has done promotional and sales work for Best Chevrolet in Modesto, Calif., for which General Motors has promised him his own Chevrolet franchise. Whenever Bruce is ready, he can pick his own spot.

Shortly before the 1971 season opened, Gossett, as articulate as Spiro Agnew, started a weekly television sports show over Channel 40 in Sacramento. And he hopes to syndicate it to some 40 cable outlets. Unlike most athletes, Gossett loves to talk. With the Los Angeles Rams, he made around 50 speeches a year.

Gossett warmed up to his mike job by taping a number of interviews with such hallowed quarterbacks as Johnny Unitas, Joe Namath and Roman Gabriel at Harrah's annual summer golf extravaganza at South Lake Tahoe.

In his tight-fitting short-sleeve golf outfit Bruce looked muscular enough to be an outside linebacker, though he carries only 185 pounds on his 6-1 frame. However, he never has been called upon to do anything except kick in his pro career, now in its eighth year.

His blondish brown hair, extending into dark mutton chop sideburns, coupled with his smooth, unlined face and deep blue eyes, contribute heavily to his wholesome good-looks.

Even a kicker must be in strong physical condition since he, too, is exposed to some fierce shots by the enemy.

Bruce nearly always booms his kick-offs so deep in the end zone there can be no runback. In fact, the opposition averaged only one yard against his kicks last season. But, when there is a return, the kicker sometimes is in position for the tackle. Certainly, the blockers love to chop down the booter. Gossett found that out last season when he was knocked out by just such a block.

His auto job forces Gossett to keep his home in Modesto, but he also prefers it that way. Both he and his wife, the former Jeannette Toney, a Lebanese beauty whom he married when he was in high school in 1958, would rather rear their children, daughter Kim, 11, and son David Bruce, 4, in a smaller town.



"It took coach Nolan only five minutes to say the 49ers needed me," says Gossett (30), an ex-Ram. "Allen never did say that. He thinks you have to be a linebacker or a defensive end." At R., Bruce (center), who does a weekly TV show in Sacramento, interviews Fred Biletnikoff (L.) and Mike Eiseheid of Oakland. "I have to tell it like it is," he says.

"It's no hardship for me," said Bruce. "I can drive from our home to the practice field in an hour and 20 minutes. When I was with the Rams and lived in the San Fernando Valley, it took about two and a half hours to get to the practice field."

Gossett has a sunny disposition that is hard to shake. But George Allen, the former Ram coach, shook it but good when he traded Gossett to San Francisco after the 1969 season.

As a kicker, Bruce could never say "I can't kick," but kick he did now. He hated to be traded by a championship contender to a team that never had won anything. "I was in a state of shock when I heard about the trade," he admitted.

Gossett just couldn't understand it. After all, his scoring average per year (95.1) was higher than any other active

player. He was unable to see why Allen could give up a field-goal kicker on a contending team to take a chance on a rookie (David Ray).

Gossett, as well as the Ram fans, figured it was because he was one of three players who didn't threaten to quit if Allen was not reinstated as coach after he was fired for the first time in Christmas week of 1968. For the other two, Joe Carollo and Don Chuy, also were disposed of.

"I thought the action taken by the other players was foolish," explained Gossett. "I had no complaint against Allen but I didn't think a new coach could really make much difference. And it was not up to the players to name the coach."

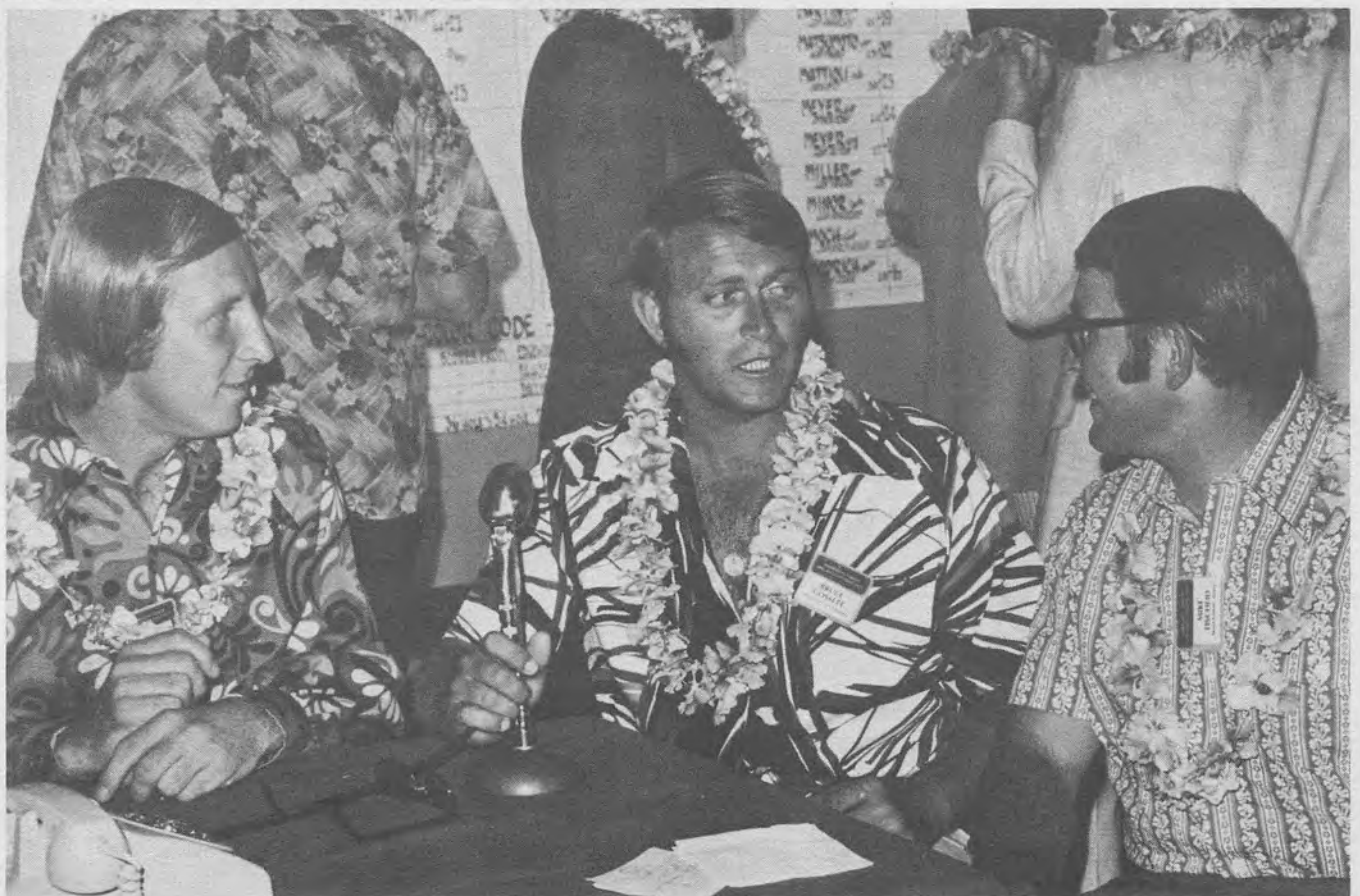
For Gossett, Allen obtained Kermit Alexander, a veteran defensive back,

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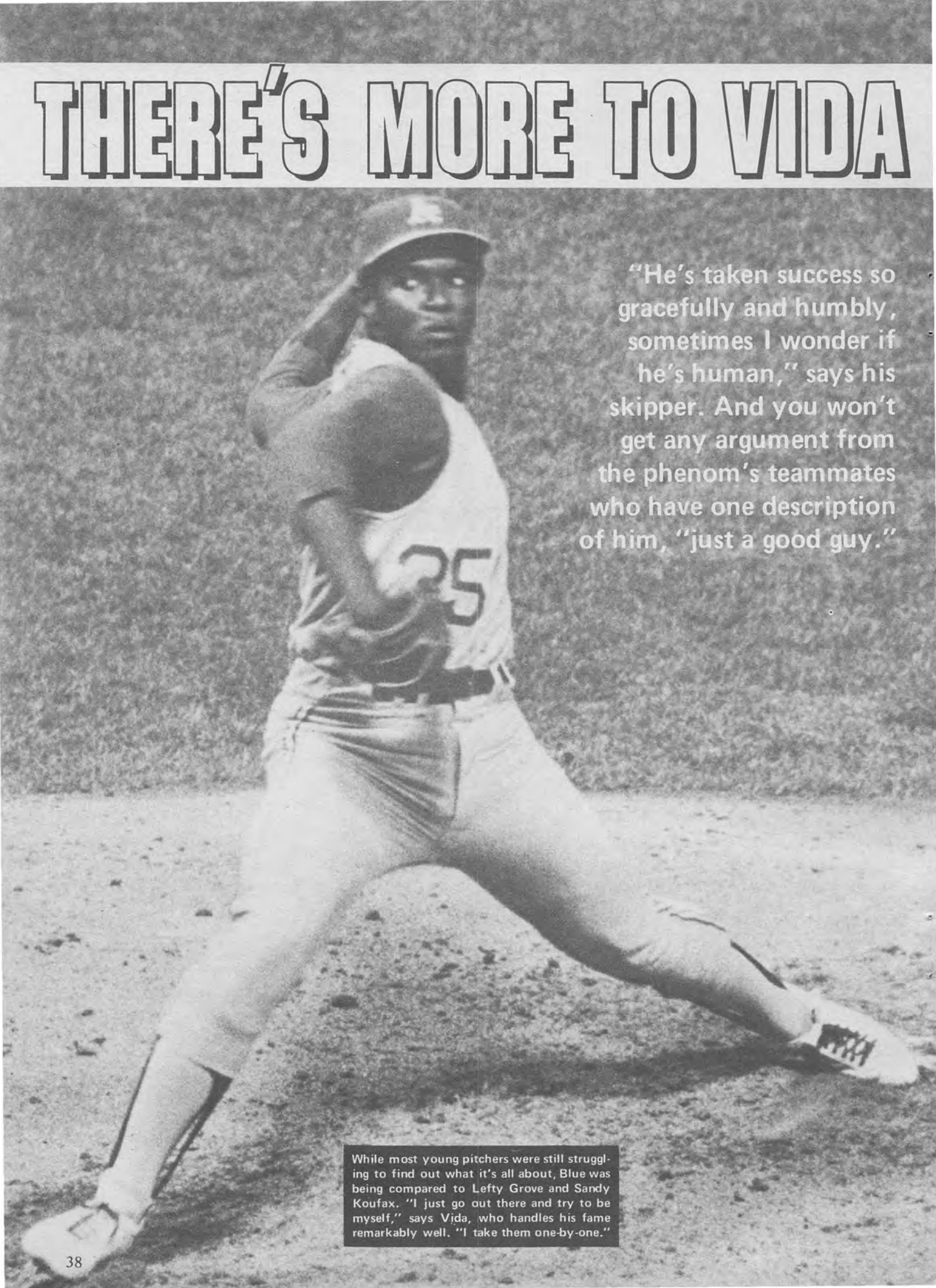


HOW BRUCE GOSSETT FOUND A HOME IN SAN FRANCISCO

A missed placement against the Falcons told the kicker what his teammates were all about and put a very special meaning into the things coach Dick Nolan had said. Things he had never heard in L.A.



THERE'S MORE TO VIDA



"He's taken success so gracefully and humbly, sometimes I wonder if he's human," says his skipper. And you won't get any argument from the phenom's teammates who have one description of him, "just a good guy."

While most young pitchers were still struggling to find out what it's all about, Blue was being compared to Lefty Grove and Sandy Koufax. "I just go out there and try to be myself," says Vida, who handles his fame remarkably well. "I take them one-by-one."

BLUE THAN DIAMOND GREATNESS

Specially Written for All-Star Sports
By Dave Newhouse
Sports Reporter—Oakland Tribune

SUCCESS has moved into Vida Blue's three-room apartment. When he goes on the road with the Oakland Athletics, success follows him on every trip. The two are now inseparable.

Success doesn't belong to just one man. It embraces a few, avoids, countless others. Joe DiMaggio first learned to live with it in 1936, Willie Mays in 1951 and Johnny Bench in 1970. Now it's Vida Blue's turn.

Blue became the sports story of 1971 before the year was half-gone, with his bid to become the youngest 30-game winner in modern-day baseball in only his first full season in the major leagues.

Eighty-one years ago, in 1890, C. Scott Stratton of Louisville, won 30 games (34-15) at the age of 20. Smokey Joe Wood of Boston was 22 years, 11 months, when he was 34-5 in 1912.

Blue will be 22 years, 2 months, at the end of the regular baseball season.

Cy Young was 24 when he won 30 games, Christy Mathewson 23, Ed Walsh 27, Walter Johnson 24, Grover Cleveland Alexander 27, Lefty Grove 31, Dizzy Dean 23, and Denny McLain 24.

No wonder success has affixed itself to Blue.

But if success has been lavishly kind to Blue, it hasn't spoiled him, and it won't change him. Not if you know Vida.

He's still the same, gracious Vida Blue Jr., although considerably wiser, that Charles O. Finley, pen in hand, removed from Mansfield, La., four years ago, thereby taking a quarterback away from the University of Houston and making the Athletics a pennant contender for the first time in 40 years.

Although the phone doesn't stop ringing and the autograph seekers keep tugging at his shirt and there's a constant stampede on his privacy, Blue has

handled it all like Brooks Robinson, whom Vida greatly admires, handles a hot smash down the third base line.

"The reason that I've handled success so well is that I really haven't thought about it," Blue said, astonishingly. "I've made personal appearances and all this, but it really hasn't gotten to me. I just try to do my job and not let the pressure build up around me.

"I think the reason is just . . . Vida Blue, man. I don't do anything to try and shy away from success. I just go out and try to be myself. I've got to be modest about what I've done. Brooks Robinson is an example of a guy who's great and modest at the same time. He's my man."

When most young big league players are still trying to find out what it's all

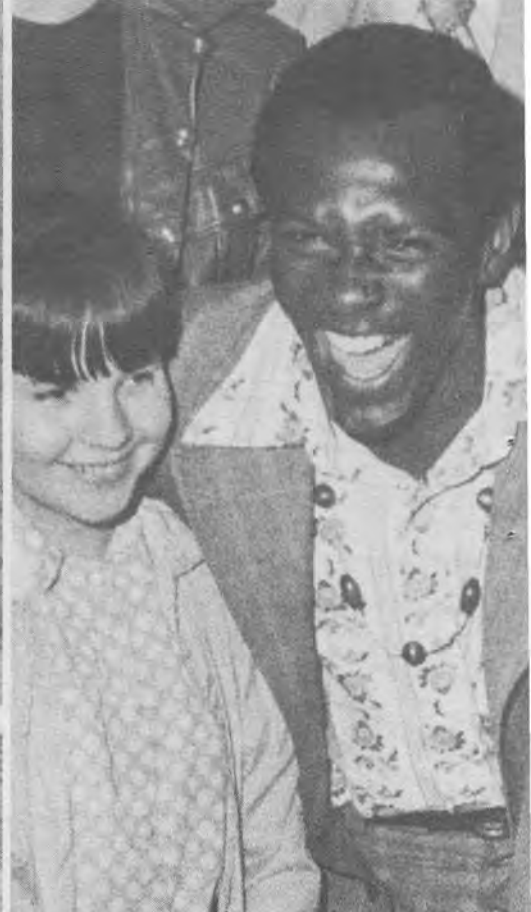
about, Blue has been called another Sandy Koufax and Lefty Grove. Every time Vida would turn around there would be another microphone thrust under his nose and a voice behind it asking, "Now what about 30 games?"

"I've just tried to take them one-by-one," Blue declared. "When I got halfway there, I just said to myself let's go out and try to win 15 more. This isn't to say I wasn't trying to win 30, but that I had to go out and try to do my job first."

Blue sometimes wonders what all the commotion is about. When Finley decided to present him with a new baby blue Cadillac convertible at a special June day in his honor at Oakland, flying out Vida's mother, four sisters and brother for the occasion, Vida said:

"Vida's a down-to-earth, basically real fine boy," says Oakland manager Dick Williams. "He takes success so gracefully, sometimes I wonder if he's human. He's too good to be true."





"I'd have to attribute my success to the kind of team I've been pitching for," says Vida, who was 17-3 at the All-Star break. At R., Blue embraces two children during a visit to a New York City public school on behalf of "Don't Be A Drop Out"—an educational drug program.

"I'd rather they didn't make such a big thing about the car. I'd like for them to give me the keys and let me go."

Blue knows the dangers of trying to be anyone but himself. "They compare me with Koufax and Grove, and this is great. But if I was the kind of guy who

All business on the mound, Blue likes to clown it up a little when off the field.



read this and thought about it, then I would try to go out and imitate Koufax and Grove."

Blue let down his defense a little by admitting he wasn't altogether impervious to pressure.

"I've been winning all year and it's great to be a winning pitcher," he said. "But it got to me when the fans wanted me to win 20 games before the All-Star break and 40 for the season. That makes a little pressure itself."

"To me Vida's a 22-year-old who has the poise of someone who's been pitching in the major leagues 15 years," said manager Dick Williams.

"I would say that family upbringing has a lot to do with his remarkable composure at such a young age, because you set your standards early. Never once on an error or a bloop hit that an outfielder just misses catching does he berate anyone else. He says, 'Well, I'll just have to do better.'"

"Nothing seems to rattle Vida. He does get upset with himself if he gets behind on a count too many times, or walks a man. On opening day he was unhappy because he felt he had let the team down," said Williams of Blue's 8-0 defeat at Washington.

"Vida's a down-to-earth, basically real fine boy, who has no ill feelings towards anyone. He has his fun, but once he's on the field, it's all business. He takes success so gracefully and humbly, sometimes I wonder if he's human. He's just too good to be true."

You won't get one of his teammates to admit differently.

"He's just a good, good guy," said Angel Mangual, Blue's roommate on the road.

"When Vida goes out and buys something for himself, like a shirt, he'll get the same thing for me, too. Every time. When we go to a restaurant, he won't let me pay. He's so good, he wants to pay every time for everything."

At the time Blue was to receive his Cadillac, unknown to Mangual, Vida was arranging with a dealer for his roommate to have a car. Again Vida was going to pay for it.

This all seems generous, but even more so, when you consider that Blue and Mangual aren't too far apart in salaries, somewhere between \$12,750 and \$15,000.

"I'd be a little embarrassed to tell you what Vida Blue is being paid," Finley admitted, which is one reason Vida got the Cadillac.

Finley may wind up next year paying Blue four times what he's making now. Not only because of his pitching success, but because of his magnetism at the gate, which has begun to rival Mays and Koufax—on the road.

On a Tuesday night in June when New York could have expected about 12,000, Blue brought in 30,000. His presence found a way to put more people in always crowded Fenway Park in Boston. Bigger crowds are evident wherever he pitches, and American



in front of the American League's West Division and World Series talk was heard, the crowds were still miniscule.

Then Blue's winning ways took hold, and the crowds started to come out—to see him. On a Friday night against Kansas City, when the A's would have been lucky to get 15,000, Vida pitched and nearly 34,000 showed up. The following Monday against Minnesota, the A's drew 4,500. Vida threw the next night and 33,000 came out.

So in two nights he was directly responsible for some 35,000 people. The A's drew only 750,000 last year with a second-place club—but this year became a definite threat to go over a million. All because of one man.

"I always knew I could pitch in the majors," said Blue, who, when recalled by the A's from their Iowa farm club last September, pitched a one-hitter and no-hitter in consecutive starts.

"But in a way it was kind of funny to get off to the great start I had this year. I'd have to attribute my success to the kind of team I've been pitching for. They've been giving 100 percent, not only when I'm pitching but when the other guys are out there. It's just been great."

Blue doesn't forget his teammates, a group which didn't place one of the regular eight in the American League's starting All-Star Game lineup. But his teammates would much rather talk about him.

"He takes everything easy, he relaxes



"Vida has more potential than anybody I've played with or against," says A's catcher Dave Duncan (10). "He wants to learn."

all the time," said Mangual. "That's why I've felt that he could win 30 games. He never changes."

"Vida has a lot of desire," said catcher Dave Duncan. "He's a great competitor, and he has so much ability, it's a pleasure to catch him."

"He has more potential than anybody I've played with or against. He's strong, keeps himself in good condition and he wants to learn. Even though he's as good as he is, he doesn't think, 'Well, I'm the big super star.' He still strives to better himself."

"He realizes there are people who've
(Continued on page 62)

League owners owe him thanks, although not as large a thanks as Finley.

The Athletics have been a poor draw in Oakland for three years for whatever the reasons. Even through the early part of this season, when they were way out

Considering his pitching arsenal and the bullets he fires from the mound, Blue is certainly qualified to demonstrate military manual of arms.



AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS:

When a team has a five year .751 won-lost percentage and yet it can't win the big one, there has to be a reason.

Specially Written for All-Star Sports

By George Girsch

Nationally Known Sports Authority



Morton (14) was unhappy with coach Tom Landry (R.) calling plays in 1970. "I accepted it for the good of the team," said Craig.

IT IS generally agreed that the Dallas Cowboys are a great football team. It is also generally agreed that they have one major fault—that of always losing their last football game of the season.

That, of course, can become a pretty annoying habit for players, coaches and fans alike. In fact, it has become so annoying in many quarters that the Cowboys have been generally regarded as a bunch of losers and choke-up artists despite their fantastic won-lost percentage of .751 over the last five years.

No one denies the inherent genius in the coaching brain of head coach Tom Landry, nor the immense plethora of talent contained on the Cowboys' roster. The Doomsday Defense is the keystone of this multi-faceted ball team that came on strong to win the National Conference championship of the NFL last season after it appeared all was lost midway through the campaign.

Any team that possesses talent such as Bob Lilly, Jethro Pugh, George Andrie, Calvin Hill, Duane Thomas, Walt Garrison, Bob Hayes, Lance Alworth, Mel Renfro, Ralph Neely, Lee Roy Jordan, Chuck Howley, Cornell Green, Herb Adderley, Craig Morton and Roger Staubach can't be all bad.

But, Chumley, it is that very fact that haunts and taunts the experts. Why is it, they ask, that the star-studded Cowboys cannot win that biggest of all games, the last one, whether it be the NFL title contest in previous years or the Super Bowl currently?

Wherein does the problem lie? Is it physical or mental? Are they born losers when it comes to big games? Or perhaps the trouble is at quarterback where the likes of Don Meredith and Craig Morton may have succumbed to some sort of jinx?

At any rate, the fate of the Cowboys, when all is said and done, rests in the large right hands of the handsome, 6-4 Morton and his spectacular aide-de-camp, Roger Staubach, the scramblin' man from the Navy.

Morton finished up fifth among NFL quarterbacks in the final statistics for 1970. He even accounted for (along with Don Horn, then with Green Bay, now of Denver) the campaign's longest completion, 89 yards to Bob Hayes against the Kansas City Chiefs. Morton's average gain of 8.79 yards per toss was the best in the loop. However, despite those fine figures, the quarterback spot is not exactly considered the Cowboys' strongest point.

Dallas is considered the best defensive team. It is also rated the top team in running. But, when it comes to passing, that is another story, which, of course, should not be, considering they have employed Meredith since they came into existence in 1960, and his successor, Morton, who seemingly possesses one of the strongest arms in football. He is accurate, he is brainy and he is experienced.

And how many teams have a Staubach waiting in the wings? He's the type of player who could very well be the



WHO'S TO BLAME FOR THE COWBOY JINX?



Morton (14) is thrown for a loss by Cleveland's defensive end Jack Gregory. Morton, the Cowboys' No. 1 draft pick in 1964, took over as the Cowboys' No. 1 signal-caller in 1969 when Don Meredith retired. He has shown flashes of greatness at times but injuries have hampered him. At 28, he finds his position being challenged by Roger Staubach.



Bob Hayes (22), who had played out his option, signed with Cowboys when no other club was willing to pay price to obtain him.

best passer-runner combination in the NFL if given the opportunity.

If Staubach is such a multi-talented player, you ask, then why does Coach Landry stick with Morton?

It will be recalled that Staubach was the Cowboys' No. 1 QB during the first three games of the 1970 season, then was benched in favor of Morton. It boils

down to the fact of Craig's extreme popularity with his teammates, and especially the reaction of his close friends on the ball club. So, despite the fact that Staubach did not quarterback the Cowboys in a losing game, he was benched in favor of Morton, who, after all, did go on to pilot the club to a championship, albeit not the biggest one.

Obviously, the thinking of the Dallas hierarchy is that while Staubach may be one of the most talented fellows ever to play quarterback for the Cowboys, why tempt fate?

Though it is true that the Cowboys have always managed to lose the last game, they have reached the playoffs five seasons in a row with Meredith and Morton running the show. So, the logic is: Why rock the boat?

A good question at this point is: Why not trade Morton and give Staubach a clear shot at the job?

The Cowboys have pondered it but then rejected the idea because of possible problems resulting from injuries

which would leave them without anybody to play quarterback. So it is Morton and Staubach, come what may.

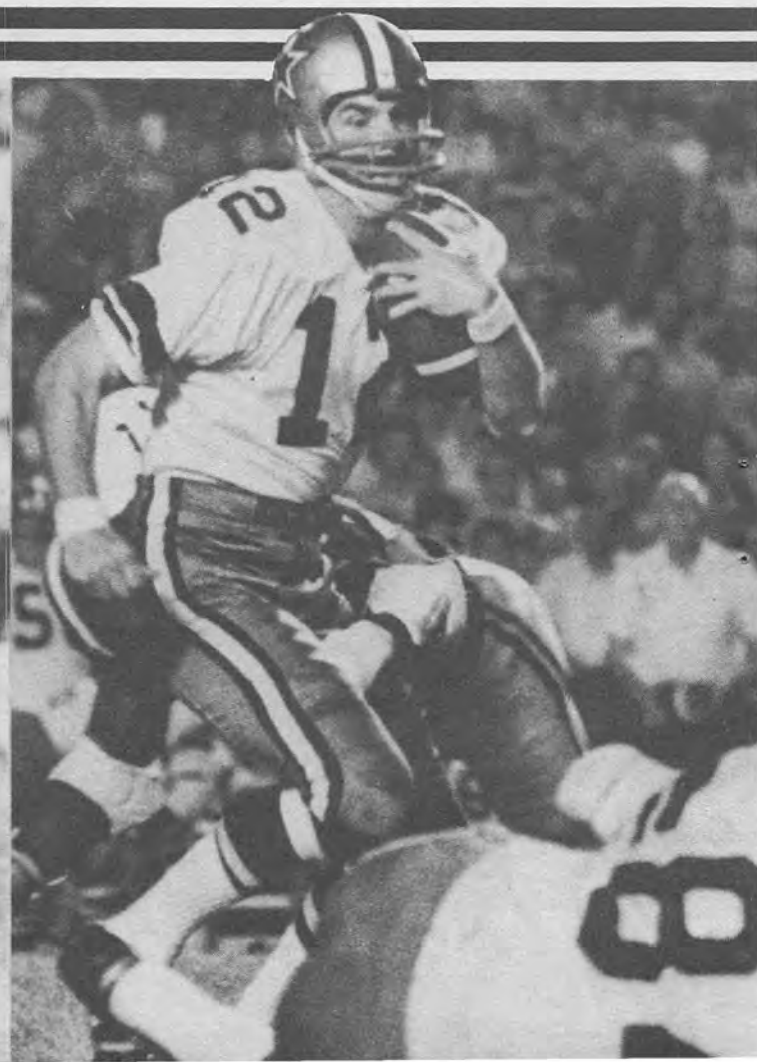
Though Morton's arm was always considered a very strong one, he has had to undergo several operations on that appendage over the past few seasons to keep it that way. The latest cutting occurred this past spring on his shoulder and elbow to correct an obstruction. Ironically, Morton and Meredith were in the same hospital for surgery at the same time, Don's operation also being for a shoulder problem.

Looking at things from Morton's side of the fence, the ex-California All-America, who was the Cowboys' No. 1 draft pick in 1964, is a bit unhappy over the way Coach Landry called the plays for him during the 1970 season.

"I accepted it," said Morton, "because I felt it was for the good of the team. Obviously it worked. However, I don't want to go through that again because I don't think I can stand another season of having Landry call the plays for me."



Cowboy stars—past, present and future—who have been unable to lick the jinx so far include: Duane Thomas (33), who had best rushing average (5.3) in NFL as a rookie; Roger Staubach (12), who is itching to be starting QB; Craig Morton (14), who wants to call own plays, and Don Meredith (16), who came so close to a title.





Ex-charger Lance Alworth (19) came to the Cowboys in a trade. He actually replaces Lance Rentzel, who was dealt to the Rams.

Landry called the Cowboys' offensive plays last year via a system of shuttling his tight ends. The head coach's reasoning for the move was "to take the pressure off Morton, who has tried to shoulder too much of the burden. I realize that there were unusual circumstances under which Craig took over from Meredith, that is we have been a

winning team for the past several years. I also felt that it was a bit difficult for Morton to inject his personality into the leadership of the team."

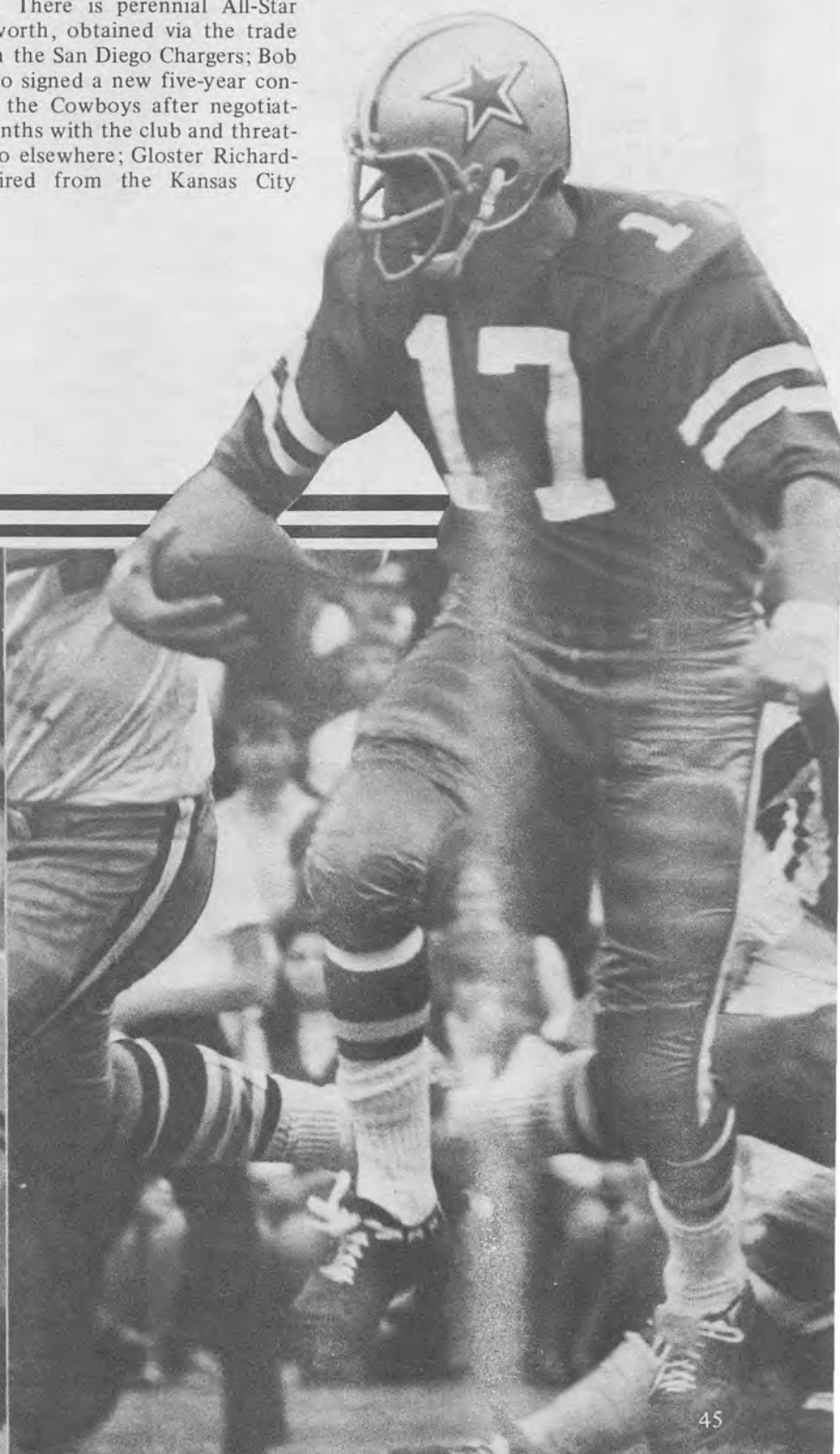
There is yet another side of the coin. Does the loss to the Baltimore Colts in the Super Bowl last January 17 still linger in hearts of the Cowboys? Was it a knockout blow, the effects of which haven't as yet worn off? Has Landry's method of calling the plays for Morton somehow destroyed the club's faith in Craig?

Morton, in the 1971 season, has perhaps the best group of pass receivers to throw to that has ever been gathered on one team. There is perennial All-Star Lance Alworth, obtained via the trade route from the San Diego Chargers; Bob Hayes, who signed a new five-year contract with the Cowboys after negotiating for months with the club and threatening to go elsewhere; Gloster Richardson, acquired from the Kansas City

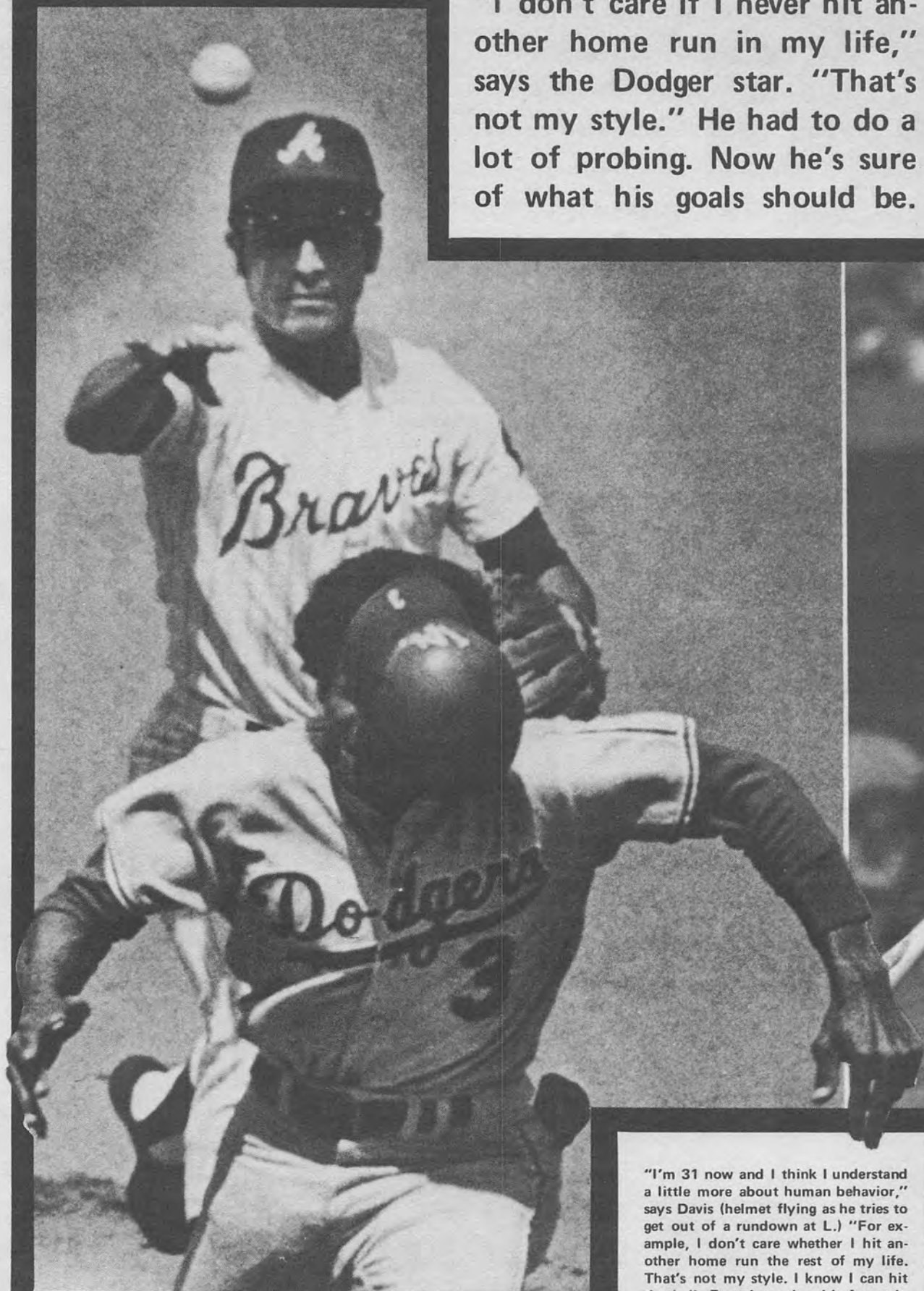
Chiefs; Wendell Tucker, direct from the Los Angeles Rams; and Reggie Rucker, third-year man from Boston University.

Hayes, the former Olympic spring champion, who has been with the Cowboys since 1965, has caught 286 passes in his six-year career for more than 5,500 yards and 59 touchdowns. After playing out his option last season because he and Dallas couldn't get together on contract terms, Hayes found nobody else in the NFL rushing after him as he expected. The price for another team to obtain him would have been

(Continued on page 58)



"I don't care if I never hit another home run in my life," says the Dodger star. "That's not my style." He had to do a lot of probing. Now he's sure of what his goals should be.



"I'm 31 now and I think I understand a little more about human behavior," says Davis (helmet flying as he tries to get out of a rundown at L.) "For example, I don't care whether I hit another home run the rest of my life. That's not my style. I know I can hit the ball. Experience is a big factor in baseball. I think I know when I can pull something off and when I can't."



WALK into the Los Angeles Dodger clubhouse and you'll see a new Willie Davis, a man who has learned much about himself, human behavior and most of all about how to play major league baseball.

The No. 3 on his uniform possibly may be the number denoting the three stages in the development of a great outfielder, one who now figures to be the key man in a Dodger team capable of winning a pennant any year.

real big cut at the ball but I'd strike out a lot, too, and that's not the way the game is played. I'm sure glad I figured out how it IS played."

In 1962, Davis hit .285 with 21 home runs and 85 runs batted in and 32 stolen bases. It appeared he had made it as a major league outfielder, combining power with speed. But he struck out 72 times that season and walked only 32 times. It may have been the season that held Willie Davis back from knowing his

WILLIE DAVIS- LEARNING TO THINK IS THE BIG DIFFERENCE

Davis readily admits he didn't know anything about baseball when he came up to the Dodgers that first year 1961. He'd played 22 games with the parent club the year before, hitting .318, but in his first complete campaign he struck out frequently and rarely made use of his feet.

The newspapers of Los Angeles continued mentioning Davis' great speed—he was a 9.5 sprinter in high school, a 25-foot 5-inch long jumper and the national record holder in that event. The press also recalled that Davis had been a fine basketball player and had quick reflexes.

"I guess I could have gone to the Olympics," Willie says without much emotion now. "But I didn't really like track all that much. Oh, I did all right at it but there was no kick in it for me. I mean, there was no pressure. I just didn't like it that much to be dedicated to working out for the Olympics. I really loved baseball, though."

But those early years were tough with the Dodgers.

"I liked hitting home runs, sure. Who wouldn't?" asks Davis. "I used to take a

own true potential—his route to stardom.

"I guess everybody has to figure it out for himself," he says. "It took me long enough. I tried lots of different things—like copying one hitter and then another. But nothing seemed to work. I was still trying to hit home runs."

Phase No. 2 in the life of Willie Davis may have begun in 1967 when he hit only .257. It was the start of a search for identity.

"I realized a few years ago that I wasn't somebody else; I was me. I had to figure out who I was and what I could do. I suppose you might say it was psychological."

Willie says he was "thinking myself out of it" too much; psyching himself up so much that he was tense. "I have to relax at the plate, that's the key," he says.

The person he gives great credit to for helping him understand himself and human behavior is his wife Jeanna.

"She'd just talk to me about things. She gave me confidence in myself and she helped me understand how I could adjust myself to situations. She was just

Specialty Written for All-Star Sports
By Dan Berger
Associated Press Sports Reporter

great. Even now, she can take the pressure off."

"The way I swing, I just have to keep hitting the ball," he says. "I didn't realize that until a couple of years ago."

And that may have been the start of Phase No. 3—stardom.

After a 1968 season in which he hit only .250, the 1969 year was a dream. Switching to a larger, heftier bat and swinging with a shorter stride, Davis jumped his average to .311 and hasn't been below .300 since.

"I used to get to the plate and tell myself, 'You've gotta hit the ball.' But that was almost a negative reaction. You know what I mean? That sort of talk means that you really don't have the confidence that you're gonna do it."

"Well, when your mind believes you can do something, doing it is much easier. I don't have to give my mind reasons. Now it's simply a matter of reacting, following through."

"Johnny Roseboro helped me a lot with that. He used to say that a positive



Davis, rounding bases (R.) after hitting one out, doesn't hit many homers any more. "I simply try to hit the ball where there's a hole," he says. Above, Willie sports a Nazi uniform for his role in a Jerry Lewis movie. Teammate Maury Wills (below) says of Davis: "He's thinking about winning games now."



attitude works wonders and he was right. That holds true in all of life. At first when I was here, I didn't have the mental discipline. I wasn't consistent.

"But I'm 31 now and I think I understand a little more about human behavior. For example, I don't care whether I hit another home run the rest of my life. That's not my style. I know I can hit the ball."

"Here's an example. Some players get up there to the plate and all they say is that they'd like to hit the ball solid twice each game. I used to say that. But not any more."

"Now I want to cover the plate and get two base hits each game. Now, when I hit one hard that someone catches or one that I figure is a hit and someone makes a great play on, I'm not going to let it bother me."

"I'll tell you who I admire. Joe Torre. He really covers the plate. But I'll never try to play like him. I'm my own ball player now."

Davis has used his speed frequently

in 12 major league seasons but more so in the last three seasons although his stolen base total doesn't reflect it. Davis' key is the unexpected.

"You know, experience in the majors is a big factor. I think I know when I can pull something off and when I can't."

In a game early this year against Montreal, Davis hit a bloop single to right that the fielder didn't charge. Davis challenged him and took off for second base. He beat the throw and ignited a Dodger rally.

In another game, Davis was at second base with none out. The rule of thumb on a ground ball is that the runner advances when a ground ball is behind him but doesn't advance on a grounder in front of him.

Davis literally stole third on a play where the shortstop fielded the ball and looked at Davis at second. Willie waited until the shortstop had started his throwing motion toward first. He then ran to third and beat the throw.



Once, Willie crept in from center field to duck in behind a runner at second base for a pickoff attempt. The play didn't work as the runner got back to second in time, but from then on, opposing runners not only had to worry about the second baseman and the shortstop but also the center fielder.

Davis is the senior Dodger in terms of consecutive service with the club. But Maury Wills, the veteran shortstop who has been in the majors one year longer than Willie, says the center fielder is a complete player now.

"He's thinking more about what he has to do to win games," says Wills. "He's more consistent and he's happier."

Possibly one of Willie's greatest accomplishments in the past three years has been his influence on the younger players. His physical appearance has something to do with it. At 6 feet 2



year, I went up to the plate determined to hit one. I don't usually do that but when we're way ahead I sometimes think I'll just swing for the fences."

His eight triples and 23 doubles led the league at that point and beginning May 1, Davis hit safely in 52 of the 60 games in which he played. He had streaks of 16 games, nine games and one of 25 games.

In an early July game at San Francisco's Candlestick Park, Davis and the Dodgers were to face tough Juan Marichal, who has a 21-1 record against Los Angeles in San Francisco games. Davis had a plan.

He told all the starters that they'd simply try to tire Marichal out by taking the first two pitches he threw. The idea is that Marichal, who uses an extremely high kick, might get a bit frustrated at having to throw so many pitches. Besides, Davis reasoned, Candlestick Park is a wind tunnel, making it harder to pitch.

Sure enough, Marichal was upset. It took him 23 minutes to retire the side in the top of the first inning as the wind and Willie Davis' tactics worked to tire out the pitcher. The Dodgers scored single runs in the first, third and fourth and eventually clobbered the Giants 14-4.

In the following game, Davis ripped a bases-loaded triple as the Dodgers broke open a close game for a 7-3 Dodger victory.

"I really don't care if we win by one run or ten runs," said Willie, "but if you can win by 10, then win by 10. But really, baseball isn't only hitting and fielding."

The remark came moments after the 14-4 rout and Willie, the guy who had

(Continued on page 73)

Davis, barreling safely into third, says: "Baseball isn't only hitting and fielding."

inches and 185 pounds, he's imposing. Then, too, his deep, deep bass voice resounds when he laughs in the clubhouse—which is often these days.

He still acts like a youngster, smiling and yelling encouragement to the youngsters—kids who were in their first years of grammar school when Willie cracked a home run in the majors.

The Dodger rookies and sophomores aren't trying to hit home runs, though, and the team batting average is up. In fact, by the All-Star break of this season, the Dodgers were hitting .272 as a team, tops in the National League with the exception of hot San Francisco.

And where was Willie?

By All-Star time, Davis was hitting a solid .353 with 125 hits and 43 runs batted in, second on the club. He had only three home runs.

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"WHY I'M GLAD FAME CAME LATE"—GEORGE BLANDA



Continued from page 13

tacks right down the center of the field where defenders have the toughest time. And he's smart enough to throw the ball low so it can't be intercepted. The opposition can't guess with him for he's always varying his pitches. One time it's a soft floater. Next time it's a bullet."

George's muscles seem to remember as well as his mind. "Here's a play that beat Green Bay in 1954," he may think. And his muscles remember, too, and act accordingly.

Blanda takes his heroics more calmly than do his teammates. He doesn't even want to talk about them.

His fame will be everlastingly sketched in the history of pro football, for he holds more records than Bing Crosby.

The NFL records rank him as the game's highest scorer with 1561 points. The Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton still lists Lou Groza as the leading scorer for it counts his four years in the All-American Conference while the NFL does not. No matter. George is only 47 points short of Lou's 1608 figure, and he'll surpass it this season.

Discarded as too old by the Chicago Bears in 1959 and by the Houston Oilers in 1966, Blanda today rates as about the best known athlete in the nation. Even more remarkable than his feats is his effect on middle-aged Americans.

He restored virility and dignity to the over 40 set throughout the land, many of whom were previously written off by both the young generation and the management of major companies.

Before Blanda, a 40-year-old man would have been laughed out of employment agencies. Today both groups are taking a better look at the older gent.

Blanda's effect was at once noticeable in the San Francisco Bay area by the marked increase in the number of joggers and bike riders. The greying newcomers felt they could at least give up their slippered ease by the fireside if a 43-year-old could win for the Raiders where the 20-year-olds couldn't.

The now generation, which before never trusted anyone over 30, didn't know what to make of Blanda, who just may have ended America's syndrome of youth.

Even before the season was over, Blanda found himself a celebrity, not only in Northern California but also all over the nation. Television personalities call him from New York, urging him to

appear on their programs. Newspapers and magazines begged for interviews. Book companies offered staggering sums for his life story.

When Blanda's jersey arrived at the Hall of Fame last December, it at once drew a record one-day attendance of 2462. Hundreds watched aides install it in a display cage. And their comments titillated Dick Gallagher, the managing director.

"Look at that—43 years old!" exclaimed one fan. "Why he's older than I am. You'd never catch me on any football field."

In the summer of 1971, a new display area was set up at the Hall to recognize the start of the three-end offense.

Most historians agree, it was born Oct. 30, 1949 when the Los Angeles Rams, using the new offense, whipped the Chicago Bears, 27-24. In checking details of the game, staffers found that Blanda had kicked a 37-yard field goal in it.

Blanda is often reminded and kidded about his age. He is nine years older than Coach Madden.

At a recent dinner, center Jim Otto joshed: "How could the coaches call a curfew on George since he's older than they? At training camp, he often strolled out at 11 o'clock to check the Santa Rosa action. Sometimes he was back by 11:10."

Why Blanda started playing pro ball when Lamonica was just entering the third grade. But what hurts is when some of the young players address him as "Mr. Blanda."

Yes, something or someone is always reminding Blanda of his years. Take the exhibition game at Birmingham in 1969. The question rose if any player had performed in the stadium before. Stabler might have but he had already departed. Up spoke Blanda: "Yeh, I played here in 1945."

It startled many of the players for they had not even been born then.

Those who knew Blanda in his early years are not too surprised by his longevity.

Says quarterback Babe Parilli, 40: "His late success doesn't surprise me at all. I've known George since college days. He was a senior at Kentucky and I was a freshman. We've been friends ever since. George is one of the most unusual men I've ever met and certainly the greatest competitor. There are a lot of these in pro football but only a few truly great ones. George will never quit. If he's down, he'll bounce right back. I believe he has a different chemical makeup from most people."

Coach Bear Bryant, who coached both Blanda and Ken Stabler (at Alabama) praised: "I'm thrilled about what George is doing. But he ought to rest up and let Snake Stabler have a chance. George has the finest football mind I

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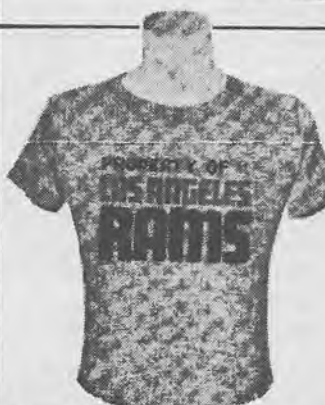
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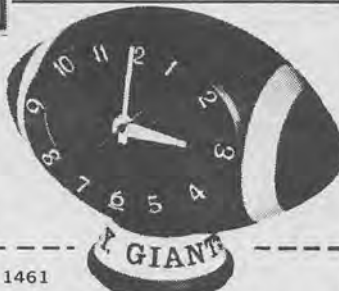
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know of. We had him down one spring when we were just getting serious about teaching our quarterbacks to recognize defenses and react to them. George was amazing. It takes me time to recognize real keys. George would take one look and, boom, he'd have the answer. He's going to make someone a great coach."

Blanda thinks Bryant is a great coach but he says he's wrong in his prediction. "Coaching is not for me," he declared. "Rather, it's for the young fellows, like Madden."

At Harrah's tournament, Blanda admitted: "I've been in the game for more than two decades and, in a way, I'm glad that fame came late in life when I can handle it. I know some very young people who let fame handle them. And I'm also proud to be an inspiration to so many middle-aged fellows and have made them feel and act younger. I think youngsters now have more respect for their fathers."

George also knows how to handle adversity. A few days before the opening of the 1970 season, the Raiders placed Blanda on waivers. Although he dominated the NFL record book, all the other 25 teams just yawned. They had less use for a 43-year-oldster than did industry. So George went back to kicking with the taxi squad.

He took it in stride. "My age is against me," he said. "A team has to look for younger players."

It was everybody's mistake for no rookie ever did so much for a team as Blanda did for the Raiders as the season wore on.

But George had had his moments before at Oakland. After he had helped crush Houston, 56-7, in the playoff game following the 1969 season, Bud Adams, Jr., the Oilers' owner, said his club had not had good leadership since Blanda took them to the AFL championships in 1960 and 1961 and to the runnerup spot in 1962.

This came as a pleasant shock to Old George. In January, 1966, Coach Hugh (Bones) Taylor told Adams he didn't want Blanda on the team anymore because he "refuses to grow old gracefully." Then Taylor added, "It's either me or him."

Doubtless Adams had misgivings for he knew "the old buzzard" could still pass. In a 1964 game against Buffalo, Blanda had thrown 68 passes and completed 37, both all-time records. However, a tennis elbow later had affected his throwing.

Blanda had announced his retirement July 25, 1959 after a 10-year-career with the Chicago Bears, during which he set an NFL record of 156 straight conversion kicks.

He would have retired once more in 1966 if anybody except the Raiders had picked him up after Houston dropped him.

Blanda felt the system installed by Al Davis was the most imaginative in the game and he knew he was smart enough to master it quickly enough to assure him some service at quarterback.

As a Raider, Geritol George did not blush unseen before his miracle season of 1970. He merely led the AFL in scoring in 1967 with 116 points and in 1968 with 117, the first to win the title on kicking alone.

But Blanda wasn't happy about this. "As a quarterback," he explained, "I always want the opportunity to play. I wouldn't even stick around if my only use was as a kicker. I love the thrill of getting off a pass before being smashed down."

His first big opportunity came in 1968 against Kansas City. After Lamonica suffered a knee injury in the third quarter, Blanda came in and hit 11 of 14 passes for 129 yards, a club record.

Then came his first-ever chance to start for the Raiders—against Denver. The Broncos were redhot at the time. They had won four of their previous five games and, with Lamonica injured, 50,000 fans overflowed Bears Stadium expecting an upset. It was then that Blanda showed what he could do when provided with a starting opportunity. He merely threw four touchdowns passes, one of 94 yards, to rout the Broncos, 43-7.

George Blanda usually spits out whatever is on his mind and this trait appeared to have ended his career after the 1969 season.

In the playoff battle with Kansas City, Lamonica hurt his hand late in the game when he hit it against the helmet of the Chiefs' Aaron Brown. He was returned to the game later and was ineffective. He was unable to move the club though the Chiefs gave it numerous opportunities through mistakes. The Chiefs took it, 17-7. The loss stung the Raiders deeply for they had beaten Kansas City twice in the previous weeks.

After the game, reporters asked Blanda if he thought he should have played after Daryle was injured. He simply answered "Yes."

The quotes swept across the country, making it look as if Blanda were second-guessing his coach.

George always has been blunt, if not short on diplomacy. At a Boosters' luncheon before the Denver game last season, he was given a batch of written questions to answer.

After reading them over, he grumped: "I'm not even going to read some of these. Why a 12-year-old would make more sense."

George was born and reared in Youngwood in the coal country of western Pennsylvania, where his father, a Czech immigrant, worked in the mines.

"I had six brothers and four sisters,"

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"To pyramid this investment into retirement in less than ten years seems like magic, but in my opinion any man in good health who has the same ambition and drive that motivated me, could achieve such a goal. Let me give you a little history.

"I finished high school at the age of 18 and got a job as a shipping clerk. My next job was butchering at a plant that processed boneless beef. Couldn't see much future there. Next, I got a job as a Greyhound Bus Driver. The money was good. The work was pleasant, but I couldn't see it as leading to retirement. Finally I took the plunge and went into business for myself.

"I managed to raise enough money with my savings to invest in a combination motel, restaurant, grocery, and service station. It didn't take long to get my eyes opened. In order to keep that business going my wife and I worked from dawn to dusk, 20 hours a day, seven days a week. Putting in all those hours didn't match my idea of independence and it gave me no time for my favorite sport—golf! Finally we both agreed that I should look for something else.

"I found it. Not right away. I investigated a lot of businesses offered as franchises. I felt that I wanted the guidance of an experienced company—wanted to have the benefit of the plans that had brought success to others, plus the benefit of running my own business under an established name that had national recognition.

"Most of the franchises offered were too costly for me. Temporarily all my capital was frozen in the motel. But I found that the Duraclean franchise

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said George. "so I learned to compete early. We competed for everything. Even the food on our table."

Good in everything, George chose Kentucky U. because he thought he was best in basketball and it was a cage hotbed. But he suffered a knee injury in football as a freshman and never went out for basketball.

George laughed. "It was just as well. They had All-Americans on the bench then. Ralph Beard and Alex Groza were in my class. And a lot of other classy players were coming back from the war."

Bear Bryant became coach when Blanda was a sophomore, and he made George a blocking back in a Notre Dame box formation.

"I was one of only about five guys who stayed after Bryant came," recalled George. "College football was a lot different then. Bear had tryouts all summer and he brought in a bus load of new recruits every day. It was rough. But he's a great coach. I owe a lot of what I've been able to do to him."

Bryant switched to a T formation in George's last two years, when he played quarterback but he did no place kicking.

"Bear wouldn't let me kick," said George. "He had a theory that a punter shouldn't place kick, too. I was the punter. My ability here came on my own. I had been place kicking since I was 6 years old. Bryant worked us like slaves 11 months of the year. I was 6-2, 195 when I entered Kentucky, but my weight dropped to 180 in football. Today I play at 218."

After graduation in 1949, George was married to his college sweetheart, Betty Harris, then a school teacher. They now have a son, Rick, 18, and a daughter, Leslie, 14.

The Bears (who first signed Blanda) like the Raiders later, almost let George get away. They traded him to the Baltimore Colts early in the season. A few days later the Colts swapped him to Green Bay. By then George Halas had second thoughts. He regained Blanda the next day, after he had arrived in Green Bay.

No bonus baby, Blanda signed with the Bears in 1949 for a \$600 advance on his salary, which he was to pay back if he made the team.

"I never enjoyed my years with the Bears," George said. "I couldn't stomach George Halas. He was so cheap he wouldn't even buy me a kicking shoe."

Blanda played linebacker as a rookie and was a third string quarterback behind Johnny Lujack and Sid Luckman. But George did kick 156 extra points in a row before missing one in 1956. He moved in and out of the starting quarterback job several times, then finally quit in 1959 after he could no longer tolerate Halas.

Brought out of retirement by Hous-

ton in 1960 for the start of the AFL, Blanda at once caught fire, pitching the Oilers to the title in both 1960 and 1961.

Blanda believes he was at his best in the early 1960s.

"I thought maybe I was through in 1961," recalled George. "Our coach, Lou Rymkus, decided I was too old. He benched a half-dozen of us older players. We went 1-3-1. Then Rymkus was fired and replaced by Wally Lemm. He put me back at quarterback and we won nine straight games and then beat San Diego for the title."

His accomplishments in those days were sometimes ridiculed on the grounds that the AFL was a Mickey Mouse league. Blanda still resents these charges.

"I think our 1960 and 1961 Houston club could have beaten the NFL champions," said George, "and I regret we didn't have the chance to prove it."

George feels he's lucky to have escaped serious injury, else he could not have played so long.

"I had a separated shoulder with Chicago in 1954," he remembered. "I had cracked ribs at Houston. I could scarcely breathe but I played and said nothing though the fans and sportswriters were saying I was too old to play. Then came my tennis elbow. My only leg injury was to my knee. I had an operation on it in 1946 and it hasn't troubled me since."

Blanda's career was different from that of other quarterbacks because he always had that little something extra going for him—his ability to kick field goals better than the specialist and with

He did well in his early years, although the records didn't show it. Lujack always was used to kick the field goals inside the 20-yard line. Blanda got the longer ones. Naturally, he missed more, and it hurt his reputation as a kicker.

A ruggedly handsome Marlboro man today with piercing blue eyes and a deeply tanned face that looks lived in, Blanda is, like the Marlboro man, a constant smoker but he prefers a different brand.

Retirement?

George seldom thinks of it.

"I'll play as long as Al Davis believes I'm contributing something to the team," he says. "I've lost very little over the years. I set up quicker now for passes. My arm is as strong as ever. I've always been a short passer with a lot of control. Nearly all your top quarterbacks are also short passers who take advantage of the bomb only when the opportunity occurs. I do the same thing. I joined Houston because I love the game. I enjoy myself even more at Oakland, even though I'm older."

Still he doesn't feel like an anachronism.

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"This game is darned good fun when you're with a winner," he continued. "I'd have quit four years ago had I been with a loser. I feel I can execute as well as ever. I've never been out of shape. I play two hours of handball every day in the winter when I'm home in LaGrange, Ill., and I try to do the same thing at the YMCAs when I'm on the road, as I have been lately. When it warms up I begin golfing again."

"Actually, I don't want to retire until the Raiders win the NFL title. I think we can do it this season. If we do, I'll probably retire, for all my goals then would be fulfilled. I'll be 44 then. That's a helluva lot longer than I ever intended to play."

INSIDE LEROY KELLY'S SECRET BATTLE



Continued from page 31

play which it has run frequently and successfully since Brown's day, although opposing teams know it's coming.

However, Kelly felt the defense has been setting more and more for the sweep and "I can't get outside, so it becomes more like an off tackle play."

Kelly, a former high school quarterback, was referring to the stack defense in which the defensive front four over-shifts toward the side of the field with the most running room.

However, Kelly feels the Browns simply got caught in the middle of a new defensive trend. "But when they stack up to cut off the sweep, they've got to leave a weakness somewhere else, and we'll devise plays to take advantage of that," he said.

There is also the idea forwarded by several pro coaches that the day of the small—and Kelly is relatively small at 205 pounds—back is reaching an end, that the trend is toward big backs.

The Browns, themselves, had hoped to draft Ohio State's big John Brockington and, failing that, picked Bo Cornell, another big guy, from Washington.

But it would be difficult to imagine any coach not wanting Kelly, or Sayers or some of the other "smaller" but still great runners.

"I think there still is a place for a back my size," Kelly says, "and I'm looking forward to the challenge of coming back to prove it."

The challenge will be nothing new to the man who took over for Brown and worked hard to turn himself into a top flight runner, excellent blocker and fine pass catcher—he has caught more than 120 passes out of the backfield for more than 1,600 yards—and another 10

touchdowns. He even throws an occasional pass, and has done some punting.

One of his most risky challenges was his demand for more than a \$12,000 raise after his brilliant 1966 season. In a daring gamble, he rejected a \$12,000 pay hike and played out his option.

"It was taking a big chance," he admits, "but I had the good fortune to stay healthy."

When he turned in another stellar year in 1967, owner Art Modell rewarded him with a star's pay increase that gave him a good shove in the direction of his present salary in the neighborhood of \$80,000.

However, perhaps the most satisfying and rewarding challenge—more so than the pay raise—was Kelly's interest in young Lance Sheely, a first grader who wanted to grow up to be a football player like his idol, Leroy Kelly.

Young Lance was in such a hurry to make it big like Kelly he neglected his school work, thinking only of scoring touchdowns. When his teacher finally gave up hope, she suggested he write "Mr. Kelly" and find out his views.

To the surprise of the teacher, Kelly took time out and wrote the boy a personal letter with an enclosed autographed picture. He wrote:

"I am very glad that you are interested in football and am honored to know that you consider me to be one of your favorite runners. As long as I am part of the game, I will continue to try my best to live up to the confidence you and other fans have placed in me."

"But in return for my efforts to please you, I want to ask a favor of YOU. Playing professional football is not all the glory it sometimes appears to be. It requires hard work, training and, although you might not think so, it requires education."

"I cannot play football forever. Age is an important factor. When I am forced to give up the sport, I must have something else to which I can turn. This is why education is important, even to a football player."

"So whether you want to play football or be anything else you desire, as a favor to me, STAY IN SCHOOL. Also, remember that reading plays an important part in the career you plan to have."

Lance's interest in education increased, and he still wants to be "just like Leroy Kelly."

Kelly, too, is thinking about his future with one year left on his present contract.

"I hope to sign for two more years, and maybe that will be it," he says.

But it's difficult to see him quitting at the age of 31, unless injuries catch up with him again. There still remain a number of goals, a number of challenges to be met.

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season, he made the biggest jump in the all time rushing standings, from 21st to 10th as the leading active rusher. Bill Brown of Minnesota, a 10-year veteran, is 11th with 5,192 yards; Sayers of Chicago, 17th with 4,918 yards, and Jim Nance of New England 18th with 4,860 yards. Sayers and Nance each have played six years, but neither had to sit behind Jim Brown for two seasons.

Although Brown's yardage appears out of sight after Kelly's two wasted seasons and two injured years, it is not inconceivable that with a few more 1,000-yard-plus performances, he could move into the No. 3 spot now held by Jimmy Taylor with 8,597 yards.

That would leave only Joe Perry, who needed 16 years to compile 9,723 yards ahead of him, along with Brown, who will always be a difficult man to replace in the memory of Cleveland fans. But it's just as certain that Leroy Kelly also will never be forgotten.

WHO'S TO
BLAME
FOR THE
COWBOY
JINX?



Continued from page 45

very high in adequate compensation to the Cowboys, as the NFL rules call for in these type of cases.

After claiming that all NFL clubs had shut their doors to him, Hayes went shopping in the Canadian Football League, but found no takers there either, despite the fact the CFL and NFL have no working agreement and that north of the border clubs take fiendish delight in grabbing off NFL stars. So, finally, Hayes, who had been so highly critical of the Cowboys in the past, signed a five-year pact which reportedly calls for \$60,000 per annum.

The Cowboys, who rarely make a trade, really came up with a doozy when they were able to corral Alworth from the Chargers in exchange for tight end Pettis Norman, tackle Tony Liscio and defensive tackle Ron East. Alworth, in a manner of speaking, replaces Lance Rentzel, who was dealt to the Rams for tight end Billy Truax and wide receiver Wendell Tucker.

Thus, with Alworth, Hayes, Tucker, Richardson and Rucker, the Cowboys appear to have a receiving corps second to none. Dallas regards Truax to be the best combination receiver-blocker they've ever had at tight end. His back-up man is Mike Ditka.

Alworth, still young enough at age 31, had been bothered by injuries and personal problems with the Chargers last year but is starting with a clean slate with the Cowboys in '71. There is no telling what new heights he may reach.

The few trades Cowboys' prexy Tex Schramm has made through the years have proven highly successful. He has brought to Dallas such mainstays as Chuck Howley, Ralph Neely, Mike Clark, Ron Widby and Ditka, among others. So there's no reason to think that the newest trade winds won't blow in Dallas' direction.

Yet, when all is said and done, it is that complex and demanding position of quarterback that holds the key to the Cowboys' fate. They got away without much of a passing attack last year, but it remains to be seen whether it can or will happen again.

The Cowboys were the happiest team on earth last January 3 after taking the measure of the San Francisco 49ers, 17-10, to win the National Conference title.

"People said we couldn't win the big games, huh?" exclaimed an ecstatic Craig Morton. "This was a big game and we won it."

Though he completed only seven of the 22 passes he attempted, Morton connected on two big ones in the second half which helped turn the tide of victory.

However, a Super Bowl title was not to be in the Cowboys' future as they bowed to the Baltimore Colts, 16-13, on Jim O'Brien's 32-yard field goal with five seconds remaining on the clock.

Thus came to the Dallas team another of the many frustrations it has suffered on so many occasions, perhaps more than any team should have to bear.

Typical of the players' feelings at the final gun was Bob Lilly's reaction. The All-League defensive tackle heaved his helmet 40 yards downfield. Recalling it, Lilly says, "It was the most frustrating moment of my life."

Aptly called the Blooper Bowl by many, it could easily have gone the Cowboys' way had they not blown several golden opportunities. The Colts converted two tipped passes into interceptions, cashing them in for 10 points—all they needed to win—in the final quarter. The second one was grabbed by Baltimore's Mike Curtis, when Dan Reeves leaped for Morton's high pass but couldn't hold it. Curtis returned to the Cowboys' 28 where the Colts bided their time until O'Brien booted the winner through the uprights.

And, what makes the Cowboys feel even worse, every time they think about it, was the fact that just about a minute earlier they had possession on the Colts' 48 with ideas of moving the ball into range for a winning three-pointer of their own.

Coach Tom Landry didn't say much to his men after the disappointing loss. "What can you say? It was all there for us and we lost it," said the Dallas mentor.

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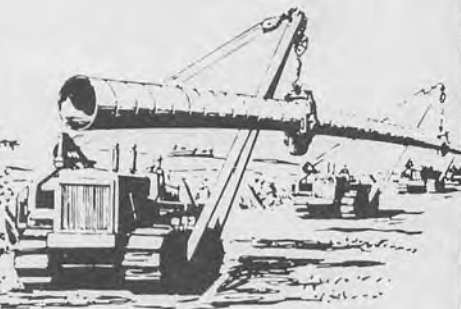
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And now it's another season and another try at the big prize. The schedule appears to be on the Cowboys' side as their six out-of-division opponents had a combined won-lost percentage in 1970 of .321.

Though the Cowboys were mighty gloomy following that Super Bowl defeat, there was even more gloom after they were humiliated on a Monday night national TV game, 38-0, by the St. Louis Cardinals. That gave them a 5-4 mark, put them in third place in the Eastern Division, two games back of the Cardinals.

"After that," remembers defensive captain and middle linebacker Lee Roy Jordan, "everybody was down on us."

The Cowboys then journeyed to Washington where they proceeded to dismantle the Redskins, 45-21, as Morton completed 12 of 15 passes for 176 yards in the Cowboys' top offensive effort of the campaign. Rookie halfback Duane Thomas, who was knocked out on the opening kickoff, returned to tally three touchdowns and rush for 104 yards.

Green Bay became the Cowboys' next victim, 16-3, as Mike Clark booted three field goals and Hayes tallied a TD on a 13-yard end-around play.

Dallas, exploding for 27 second-half points, ripped the Redskins for the second time in 15 days, this time, 34-0, before edging the Cleveland Browns, 6-2, on Clark's pair of second-half field goals.

The final game of the regular season saw the Cowboys win their fifth straight game to capture the NFC Eastern Division crown by crushing the Houston Oilers, 52-10, as Morton completed 13 of 17 attempts for 349 yards and a club-tying five TD tosses. Hayes set a Cowboys' mark by catching four touchdown passes.

The Cowboys' Doomsday Defense finished the regular season by permitting only 15 points and only one touchdown in its last four regular season triumphs. The offense led in rushing, averaging 164.3 yards per game.

The Cowboys again showed their mettle in winning the NFC Divisional Playoff, 5-0, over the Detroit Lions, recording the lowest scoring victory in NFL playoff annals. It also marked the fifth consecutive game in which the Cowboys' defense did not allow a touchdown.

Then came the glorious triumph over the 49ers, and the dregs of defeat at the hands of the Colts.

What caused the amazing rebirth of the Cowboys after being almost at death's door following the humiliating defeat by the Cards?

According to Lilly, "After that loss, everybody said, 'We're out of it, so let's relax and have some fun.'"

Player-coach Reeves says, "Nobody

loved us any more, so we had to band together."

Coach Landry explains, "The team's ability to turn things completely around was really something. In all my years in pro football, I can't recall anybody ever doing this before. I've seen teams do it from season to season but never during the same season. It was most gratifying that we made the Super Bowl after being written off after mid-season."

Morton played the '70 season under several handicaps that would have forced a lesser man to the sidelines. Besides his shoulder and elbow ailments, he had a very bad knee and a cut on his throwing hand which required four stitches. But his biggest problem was the elbow which hampered his throwing tremendously.

But, in the words of 49er head coach Dick Nolan, "When you can run the ball like the Cowboys do, you don't have to pass."

The condition of Morton's arm in '70 is best summed up thusly: Tex Schramm asked, "Does it feel normal when you cut loose?" Craig's reply was, "I don't know what normal feels like."

The great Dallas defense which went 19 straight quarters over a six-game period last year without allowing an enemy TD, figures to be even better than ever. It's the offense that has Landry worried, with Morton, of course, the principal cog. If he's got it this year, the Cowboys figure to breeze in the NFC East and perhaps go on and possibly win their final game of the season, something they've been aspiring to since joining the NFL in 1960. It not, it'll be a long hard road, as it was in '70. But how can you expect a team to go that far without a passing attack two seasons in a row?

Maybe the change of scenery from the Cotton Bowl to the new Texas Stadium will help the Cowboys to that long lost Goldmine in the Sky.

There are many doubters among Cowboy-watchers about whether the Cowboys have the moxie to gain the Super Bowl title during our lifetime. They maintain that no matter what they do and how far they go, they'll never ever win that big one.

Lee Roy Jordan insists the critics are wrong.

"Our defense is what'll carry us into the 1971 season. We've got togetherness like we never had before and we're not about to lose it. Just wait and see."

There are so many intangibles involved in winning and losing championships that it would take an entire book to list them. But if one of the principal ones is pride, then the Cowboys will be right in there again.

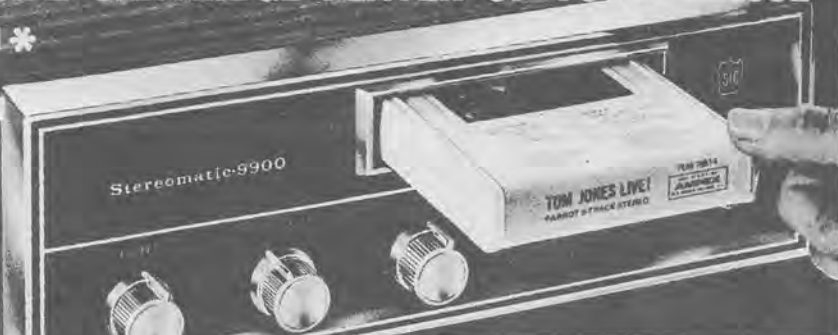
And, as Coach Landry explains, "It is a great handicap to play in an atmosphere where everyone maintains you cannot win the big ones. I say they're

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wrong. We won a lot of big games last season in order to reach the Super Bowl."

It is very difficult to judge Morton's pro career because of the numerous injuries he has suffered since joining the club in '65. Following a four-year apprenticeship behind Meredith, Craig took over the top job in '69 when Meredith retired before the season began. He was doing okay until he dislocated the index finger on his right hand during a pre-season contest. After missing one regular season setto, he returned to set the league ablaze, hitting on 73 percent of his tosses until suffering a shoulder separation in the fourth game of the campaign. He played the rest of the season, but was hampered in his throwing, of course. He underwent surgery after the season and had a bit of trouble getting back into the throwing groove in

1970, but showed many signs of greatness.

Before Landry decided to take over the play-calling himself, Morton was regarded as an excellent tactician. Perhaps his biggest fault is that, because of his size, he is not too mobile and runs into trouble trying to avoid the pass rush.

At age 28, Morton is still trying to develop that magic jewel of consistency, the item that separates the men from the boys. And with a talented gent like Staubach itching to get into the regular lineup, there's not too much margin for error.

The Dallas club has the possibilities and the capabilities of going all the way. They almost did it last year on a wing and a prayer.

Somehow, it seems, they'll need a lot more this year, and so will Craig Morton.

THERE'S MORE TO VIDA BLUE THAN DIAMOND GREATNESS



Continued from page 41

been in this game some time who can teach him things to make him better. It's a great ability.

"Vida knows the game, has a pretty good idea of the hitters and knows what to throw in different situations. Usually a pitcher doesn't pick these things up until he's been around three or four years. Vida, because he wants to be a great pitcher, makes it a point to remember these things.

"Vida keeps his cool; he knows how to handle things," added Duncan. "I think a lot of credit for this goes to Tommy Davis. Tommy also had a lot of success early in his career, so he can help Vida."

Davis, who shares a three-bedroom apartment in Oakland with Vida and an old friend of Tommy's, denies he acts as Blue's counselor.

"We talk, we talk," said Davis, "but you can't counsel Vida because he's a man. His father died when he was 17 and since then he's been the man of the house.

"Vida has an amazing character. He's very mature for his age. It's just enjoyable being his roommate. He can be a kid at times, which you want to see, and he can be an elder statesman."

"Vida's like an old man really," said Mangual, an outfielder. "He thinks like an old man. He tells me, 'You know you're good, you just wait for your time, don't get excited, just wait,' just like an old person."

"If Vida keeps going like this," said Davis, "he's going to surpass anyone's

success in three or four years. Barring injuries, and if he keeps himself strong, he's got to be some kind of an athlete.

"He's had a lot of success and he wears it well, which is good, because everyone wants to talk to someone who wears it well. He's good looking and he's a bachelor, so he'll be in the limelight for quite a while."

Davis, realizing that Blue wasn't making much money, asked Vida after spring training if he wanted to live with him and his friend, to cut down his expenses. Blue agreed and Davis immediately turned into his personal secretary.

"Vida has girl friends and the phone stays off the hook," said Tommy. "He's going to have to get his own phone. I have to doctor the calls, because some of them are ridiculous.

"A lot of stuff is coming to him fast, and I say, 'Vida, you're pitching in two days, you've got to relax.' The day he's pitching I take all calls. He's such a nice guy, he'll listen to everybody."

Vida says his calmness isn't unusual. "It runs in the Blue family," he pointed out. "We just try to be cool, we don't get excited, we take it nice and easy.

"It's just like Hank Aaron, who misses a pitch, then sits there nice and relaxed in the back of the box, and when the next pitch comes in, SPLAT!"

"I call him Junior," said Mrs. Sallie Blue, Vida's mother. "Our family is very close. Vida's father worked at an iron foundry. When he died four years ago, that drew us closer.

"When it happened, I said, 'Now, Junior, you're the man around here.' That made a big difference. Vida just seemed to grow up faster.

"Sometimes I ask myself is it really true. Is that my Junior pitching all those beautiful games? Is that my Junior everybody is making a fuss about?"

"But I knew that if he got a chance, he'd do it. You see, Junior is a very,

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very poor loser. And when you're a very, very poor loser, you always try harder to win."

Blue's desire to win figured in the 35 touchdown passes he threw as a senior, leading DeSoto High School of Mansfield to an 11-1-1 record, the defeat coming in the state playoffs. That interested Houston, but the Texas school had only a scholarship to offer. Finley had money, and Vida now had responsibility.

"I've had no reason to regret my decision," said Vida, who still sees as many football games as he can. "I really love baseball. I'm going to try and get the best out of it."

He's off to a good head start.

Nothing, outside of his own mistakes, works Vida up. In fact, before a game he'll take batting practice, then catch a 30-45 minute nap.

"I'll come out and take two or three swings, then go back up and put myself in seclusion for awhile," said Blue, who isn't bothered by air travel because he sleeps through it.

"I try not to think about the ball game until it's time for me to come out and warm up."

Blue, despite his success, knows he can still improve as a pitcher.

"Definitely," he stressed. "I'm pitching and learning, and I don't think you can learn too much in this game or in anything you do."

"To improve, I will have to become the pitcher who can change up 10 to 12 times a game. It's good to be able to throw the ball by people, but I think in the long run it will tell on you if this is all you do."

"To make the good two-ball, no-strike change up for a strike, I really admire pitchers who can do that. It's just a matter of time. I'll have to practice and work on it and say to myself that I'm going to be that kind of a pitcher."

"I don't see the slider for me. I don't think it's the ideal pitch. I imagine just a straight change up and to take something off the curve ball. I do it now, but I should do it more often. That should really help me."

"We've suggested that he mix in his change a little more," said Williams, "and he has a good one, incidentally."

"He is mixing in his curve more. One time I thought he was doing it too much in the early innings. But he didn't think so. I checked the charts and he was right—he hasn't been wrong yet."

"Vida's ball moves, and if he's having control problems, we tell him to go for the middle of the plate, because of the way the ball does move."

"He has the fast ball and the curve, but you can't just rare back and throw forever with two pitches, unless you're extraordinary, which he is right now," the manager said.

"Sandy Koufax was like Vida, although it took him longer to get his control. But he got by with two pitches until he put his change in."

Koufax saw Blue for the first time and commented, "I wish I had what he had that young. He's ahead of me. He's ahead of the world."

"From the press box, Vida looked like he had pretty good stuff, pretty tough. I don't know anybody who has as great a future in baseball as he does."

"The only thing is that you can't be disappointed on the day when the other guy pitches a better game than he does. That's going to happen," Koufax warned.

Duncan says there's room for Blue "to have better control."

"He doesn't get his breaking ball over the plate consistently, except for occasional spells of two or three innings. But he sometimes has to rely on the fast ball."

"With experience, this is all going to change; he'll be able to throw that breaking ball anytime he wants. This will make the fast ball even more effective. And as hard as he throws, there's just no limit to what he can do."

Duncan and Blue don't disagree on pitches, except to confuse the batter.

"A lot of the time, with two strikes on the batter, I'll have Vida shake, or he'll shake, and we'll come back with the same pitch. It's just to get the hitter thinking, to break his concentration."

Williams said that Blue never goes over the hitters before a game. "Duncan and I take care of that. Vida has such a good memory bank, he remembers who he's faced and how he's supposed to throw to him."

"You know, I've never had to criticize Vida, except for one time, and that had nothing to do with pitching," said Williams.

"We had a sacrifice situation, with a man on second and nobody out, and he tried to beat out the bunt. I wanted him to save his strength by not running; his job was just to move the guy along."

One thing the news media has found out is that Blue is cooperative, win or lose. So maybe Vida already knew what Koufax had in mind.

"When I'm not sharp and give up four runs to Minnesota, that's quite an honor," Blue said after a loss to the Twins. "Just to hold them down to two runs, you have to be extra sharp. So I wasn't too upset about losing tonight. I just know you have to come back the next time and work harder."

Mangual said that Blue doesn't like to go out much on the road.

"It's tougher for him now," Mangual explained. "It's Vida sign here, Vida sign this. The phone rings every minute. Long distance call, local call, anywhere."

"So Vida wants to spend most of the time in the room, looking at TV. We



Robert Bregoff, President and founder of Utility Color Labs., Inc.

When you meet Mr. Bregoff you can't help but be charmed with the personality, keen wit and good humor of the man. He likes people and wants to see those associated with his organization share in the growth and success his company enjoys. This is the man who, appalled at the utter lack of any process to re-color and repair flexible vinyl materials, set about developing and processing the trademarked UTICOLOR system, which even today — is the only one of its kind in existence.

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have to put a lock on the phone before he pitches.

"I kid Vida about his record, and so do the other players. We put signs up in the locker room.

"One time, Vida said, 'Angel, do this,' and I say, 'OK, I do this, because you're 16-2,' and he said 'now don't do it because I'm 16-2,' and laughed. He takes the kidding very well.

"I'll never change my roommate," Mangual stressed. "He never changes, the same person all the time.

"Vida does everything right."

With that comment, 11 opponents in the American League nodded dejectedly in agreement. And success smiled.

**DAVE
MCNALLY—
ALL HE
DOES
IS WIN**



Continued from page 35

enjoy his first 20-game season (22-10) and followed up with 20-7 in 1969 and 24-9 last year.

It's now safe to say that the Orioles made a shrewd investment back in 1960 when they gave Dave, then an 18-year-old kid with no high school pitching experience, an \$80,000 bonus to sign.

As McNally recalls that fruitful day, "I had quite a few ball clubs offering me big bonuses. I'd won 41 out of 47 games for my American Legion team. But the bidding finally boiled down to the Dodgers and Orioles.

"The Dodgers offered me \$5,000 more, but they had a real strong pitching staff at the time and the Oriole scouts—Jim Russo and Jim Wilson—sold me on the team's youth movement and what a great pitching instructor Paul Richards was."

Paul Richards is long gone from the Baltimore scene and Billy Hitchcock and Hank Bauer followed in his wake. McNally, in fact, didn't start to prosper until Earl Weaver took over the Birds in the middle of the '68 season.

Dave pitched for Weaver when he was managing at Elmira in the Eastern League in 1962. He posted a 15-11 record and the next year he was promoted to the varsity for good.

And it could just be coincidental or the fact that McNally didn't reach maturity as a pitcher until 1968.

The father of three who, himself, was left fatherless at the age of two when his "old man" was killed in Okinawa, now thrives on pressure.

McNally pitched a 1-0 shutout against the Dodgers to complete the Birds' startling four-game sweep of the 1966 World Series. He also scored victo-



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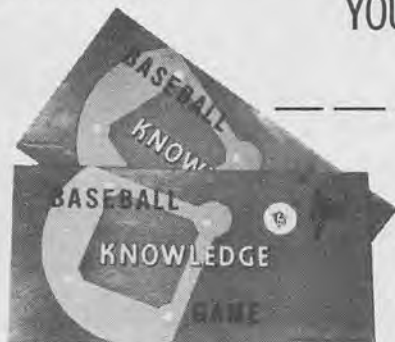
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ries in both the 1969 and '70 AL play-offs with Minnesota, but despite these impressive accomplishments, he carried a deep guilt feeling over losing one game and failing to finish another in the 1969 Series with the miracle Mets.

"I shouldn't have lost the second game of that Series," Mac said. "It was 1-1 in the ninth inning and I had the bottom three hitters in the Met lineup coming up with two outs and let it get away."

"Then, in the fifth game, I was ahead 3-0. I should have been able to hold a lead like that. But I let little Al Weis tie it with a homer in the seventh."

But McNally vindicated himself last October when he helped reduce Cincinnati's vaunted "Big Red Machine" to a pile of scrap. He went the distance in game No. 3 for a 9-3 victory and made the contest a shambles in the fifth when he walloped a historic grand slam off Wayne Granger.

"I just told myself, 'Don't bail out. Try to make contact with the ball and maybe it will drop in for a hit,'" he said.

It was just another way McNally found to beat the opposition, something he's made a habit of for the past four years. Call him "McLucky" and even Dave will laugh. But no one else in the American League finds him the least bit funny.

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A NEW LOOK AT ED KRANEPOOL



Continued from page 17

3,000 times in the majors. That's not a chance?"

Actually, before the start of the 1971 season, Kranepool had compiled 2,930 official major league at-bats in 930 games. In that time, he had collected 721 hits for a .246 average. His hits included 110 doubles, 16 triples and 62 homers. He had driven in 295 runs and scored 268 times. His highest single season average was .269 in 1967. And his best season for homers and RBIs was 1966, when he hit 16 out of the park and knocked in 57 runs. Not very impressive figures, to say the least.

They were so bad, in fact, that Kranepool used to take a lot of abuse. "I'd walk down the street and try to hide," he says. "I could hear the people say, 'There he is. He ain't worth a damn.' But it's different now. I can walk with my head up high.

After the first 70 days of this season, Kranepool had put in enough time in the major leagues so that he no longer could be shipped to the minors without his permission. Under the rules, had the Mets attempted to send him to the minors, he would have been free to make a deal for himself if he wanted. He says he doubts he would have gone back to Tidewater had the Mets decided to send him there. "What would I have to prove playing minor league ball?" he asks. "I went down last year and hit .310 and drove in 45 runs in 47 games."

Fortunately for him—and the Mets—the problem of going to the minors did not arise. By the end of April, he was hitting an incredible .467, and he was solidly set as the Mets' first baseman against right-handed pitchers. "That's the significant difference," he said in comparing this season with the others in the past. "I go to the ball park knowing exactly when I'll play. It makes the game easier."

By the end of May, his average naturally had slipped, but it still was in the mid-.300's. And as June turned into July, he was the Mets' number one hitter with a .307 average, and was tied for the club lead in home runs and runs batted in. "I'm still up there with the batting leaders," he noted. "It makes you feel good being in the papers every morning. It's status. I enjoy it."

When Kranepool joined the Mets, he was only 17. He won't be 27 until Nov. 8. He was the heart of what Stengel once called "The Youth of America." But he was young only in chronology,

not in manner. He ran like an old man. He wasn't aggressive. He didn't hustle. And he was a chronic complainer. In 1963, when he was only 18, teammates considered him "a young fogey."

That same year, he pulled a leg muscle, and Stengel asked him: "Why should you pull a muscle in your legs, when your legs are only eighteen years old?"

There was a lot of pressure on Kranepool. Stengel thought he should be better than he was, and the fans blamed a great deal of the club's losses on the youngster's inability to deliver. Everyone who saw him said he should be hitting much higher. He showed little power and less drive. Kranepool was not any happier with the losing than were the fans. "I get so tired of losing," he said. "It makes the days so long and the nights so unpleasant."

Finally, in 1964, he seemed to be developing into the reliable first baseman the Mets needed so desperately. On July 11, he was hitting .296 and had become such a feared hitter that in the fourth inning of a game between the Mets and St. Louis, Ray Sadecki (then with the Cardinals, but now a Met) decided to brush Kranepool back from the plate. As Sadecki's delivery sped toward his head, Kranepool ducked. Mobility, however, is not one of Kranepool's strong points, and, in ducking, he managed to sprain his ankle. He had avoided the pitch, but he had to leave the game. With the aching ankle as an excuse, his average dipped to .259.

The following season, he again got off to a strong start. By mid-season, he was hitting close to .300 and was named to the National League's All-Star team. By the end of the season, his average had slipped to .253. He blamed it on a bad back.

He never did sustain his hitting over a full season, and, each time, it seemed he had another excuse. Because of his constant failures, he was subject to a great deal of criticism, more than any other Met. "I've been here longer," he reasoned last year, "and they expect more from me. Sometimes, I expect more from me also."

So did others. For instance, Paul Richards, vice president of the Atlanta Braves, said: "What's the matter with that kid? He looked like such a fine prospect, and nothing ever happened. I guess the bonus spoiled him."

Kranepool thinks that possibly his first mistake was signing with the Mets. "I've been happy in New York and made some pretty good money, but I might have done better elsewhere," he says. "I think there might have been more pressure on me in New York than anywhere else."

The pressure, if any, was of his own making. He didn't always hustle, he became bored and restless as each season



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wore on, and he did not become compatible with the fans. Still, he wanted to remain in New York.

When the National League expanded into Montreal and San Diego, he proclaimed: "If I'm picked by one of those teams, I won't go. I've had enough losing games. I want to stay here. We're building a better ball club and I want to be part of it. If I get picked by an expansion club, I'll quit baseball."

Both Montreal and San Diego bypassed him, and he remained with the Mets. He had a couple of key hits as the Mets made their miracle run to the National League pennant in 1969. And he contributed a home run in the World Series as the Mets completed their amazing rise to the top by beating the Baltimore Orioles in five games.

Last year, he was virtually ignored, and at mid-season, he was sent to Tidewater. Hodges' lack of confidence in him almost destroyed him. "I don't want to play for the man. I want to be traded," he said at the beginning of the 1971 season.

He wasn't traded—and he did play. And he couldn't have been more surprised or happier. "To tell the truth," he said, "I didn't think I'd be here this season." And then he repeated what he had said earlier: "I'm glad the Mets had faith."

So are the Mets.

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HOW
BRUCE
GOSSETT
FOUND A
HOME IN S.F.



Continued from page 37

and a second-round future draft choice.

In San Francisco, the trade was regarded as a steal. It was felt that Alexander was over the hill and that Gossett would have won at least five more victories in 1969 had he been with the 49ers, long toe-weak.

"I knew we keenly needed a kicker," said the dedicated, handsome coach, Dick Nolan, "and I considered Gossett the most consistent kicker in the league. I believed he would at once make a difference in our offense." He certainly did.

Even before the 49ers started their amazing resurrection, Gossett had second thoughts about the trade.

"It took Nolan only five minutes to say the 49ers needed me," said Bruce. "Allen never did say that. He thinks you have to be a linebacker or a defensive end to be praised. I felt he never respected me as a field-goal kicker. I was just a piece of beef on the field. He probably resented taking up a place on the squad by a guy who could only kick. I had to make every attempt count or he would be sore."

Gossett saved the Rams' hide so many times. In 1968, his field goals won two games and tied another. In a key contest at Milwaukee, he beat the Packers, 16-14, on a 27-yard boot with 55 seconds remaining. His 20-yarder with 17 seconds left tied San Francisco, 20-20 and a 36-yard rocket in the final four seconds whipped the Giants, 24-21.

In 1969 Bruce provided the Rams with their second victory in a game in which they failed to score a touchdown. He hit on field goals of 28, 23 and 11 yards to repluse the Chicago Bears, 9-7.

During his six-year Ram career, Bruce connected on 41 of 43 field goal attempts from 19 yards or shorter. In his final season in Los Angeles, he hit 21 of 22 from distances up to 40 yards.

But the game that meant most to Gossett was against Green Bay in 1965, when he scored field goals of 26, 49, 43 and 41 yards for a 12-10 Ram victory. He had four for four at shorter distances against Philadelphia in 1967.

But it was an horrendous miss at Atlanta last season that showed Bruce how much the 49ers appreciated him.

After hitting field goals of 43 and 27 yards against the Falcons, Bruce blew one from the 19 in the last six seconds that enabled Atlanta to tack on the 49ers' first defeat, 21-20, of the 1970 season.



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"I was simply miserable about that," recalled the Talking Toe. "Why Allen would have crucified me for that. But the 49ers made it sound as if someone else had missed it... that really wasn't my fault at all."

"Coach Nolan told me that he wished I were in that situation 100 times, that all good kickers miss one occasionally."

"Then there was Dave Wilcox, who kept the Atlanta reporters away from me. He told them, 'Leave the guy alone. He feels bad enough.' John Brodie came over and, laughing, told me to forget it. 'You're still the best kicker in the league,' he said. I liked the 49ers before, but I loved them now."

"And so you know something else? I got telegrams and calls all the next week trying to console me. Why, Lou Spadia (49er president) even called to tell me to get the miss off my mind and he added how happy he was to have me with the club."

Bruce gets a tremendous clout into his kicks. He lost six field goals in 1966 when the ball hit the goal posts and bounded back. In Baltimore, he once toed one so hard that, after hitting the bar, it bounced back into his arms.

Gossett found as a 49er he got fewer opportunities from inside 30 yards than he did with the Rams, for Brodie usually went for the touchdown. So Bruce

proceeded to make good on eight of 11 from between 40 and 50 yards.

Against Denver in late October, Gossett scored his fourth field goal with 1:21 to put the 49ers out of reach at 19-14.

And his 40-yard fielder on an icy turf provided the deciding points in the 49ers' 17-14 conquest of Minnesota in the first playoff game for the NFC title.

Earlier, his kicking had brought down Green Bay, 26-10, when he connected on four field goals. He supplied the only scoring in the final quarter on kicks of 41 and 36 yards.

Gossett wound up fourth in the NFC scoring with 102 points, the same as he tallied in 1969. His high, 113, came in 1966. Bruce now ranks third among the active NFC scorers with 673 points, behind Minnesota's Fred Cox (790) and St. Louis' Jim Bakken (757).

In preparation for the 1971 season, which Gossett feels will be the 49ers' year, he worked out four days a week on a field in Modesto.

"Who held for you?" Bruce was asked as he relaxed over a Coke at Harrah's.

"Nobody held for me," he replied. "I just teed the ball up and kicked it. I wouldn't want a holder. I'm adjusted to Brodie's hold. If I let someone hold the ball for me, it might throw me off when Brodie takes over."

Does Bruce consider himself the best kicker in pro football today?

"I wish I were," he answered. "But I'm not. Jan Stenerud of Kansas City is easily the best. He's by far the most powerful kicker I've ever seen. He gets so much loft in his sidewinder kicks. I expect him to set all sorts of records before he's through."

While preparing for the 1971 football season, Gossett also readied himself for his television career.

"I'm going to have to tell it like it is even if I blow a kick that costs us the game," he said. "Not only can I discuss my kicking, but I can talk to the other players, get dressed and rush to the opponents' dressing room."

Gossett also filmed the workouts at training camp, and he plans later interviews with the Oakland A's, San Francisco Giants, Seals and Warriors.

National Football League rules prohibit Gossett from predicting the outcome of games to be played. However, he says he may borrow an idea from Norm Van Brocklin's Atlanta show and call on a pretty girl for the predictions.

"There's one prediction I'd like to make early," said Gossett, "and I guess you know what that is. I want to predict a Super Bowl title for the 49ers. I think I've got it figured out. I'll have a pennant behind me that reads: '49ers, '72 champs.'"

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THE MANY SIDES OF CARL ELLER



Continued from page 21

ter of matching my talent against his. Actually, pro football is not that much different from college ball. The mental part, that is what is tough. Forty men can make the team, and 65 to 70 try out. Always, one guy ready to take your job. You may have all the talent, but you have to be mentally tough. You have to shrug off a lot of stuff."

In January, 1970 Eller didn't find it particularly easy to shrug off a television station's report that attempted to link his name to a federal gambling investigation. The Chiefs' Dawson also was rumored to be involved in the investigation. In Eller's case, the text of the telecast stated: "It has been learned that gambling investigations which rocked professional football just before the Super Bowl may have reached the ranks of the Minnesota Vikings. The first to be named, according to our sources, is All-Pro defensive end and former University of Minnesota star Carl Eller."

"The extent of Eller's involvement is questionable, but is said to have been touched off when Minneapolis police repossessed an auto driven by Eller and leased for him by a disbarred attorney in Eller's home town of Winston-Salem, N.C. The car was picked up for non-payment of lease fees. Our informant also said that other top Viking players may be involved with the gambling probe."

On January 27, 1970 Eller, accompanied by his attorney and Viking general manager Jim Finks, issued a ringing denunciation of the report. In a statement, Eller said, "I want to make it very clear that I am responding to a statement made over a local television station for one reason, only: to be sure there is no reflection against myself or the Minnesota Vikings."

"I don't believe that the unsubstantiated, ridiculous and utterly false charge is otherwise worthy of response. I have not done anything wrong. I am not at all concerned about the false charges, except that they might wrongfully reflect on myself, my teammates and the Minnesota Viking organization. My only concern is to become the best football player in the National Football League, playing on the best team in professional football. I think you have to understand that pro football is my stepping-stone to a successful life. I would not jeopardize it. I have put in six years trying to be the best in my profession and I am deeply disappointed that something like this charge might distract from it."

Nothing since then has distracted from Eller's reputation as the best at his position. He has been a standout in most games. One of his greatest performances, though, came during a 1968 game against the still-imposing Green Bay Packers, as the Vikings put an end to the one-time champions' hopes and established themselves as the front-runners for the Central Division crown. In that game, Eller swarmed over quarterback Bart Starr three times, forcing him out of the game after hit No. 3; tackled Donny Anderson with such devastating force he fumbled the ball to end a scoring threat, and tipped away a Green Bay field goal attempt. But that wasn't all. When the Vikings needed some strength offensively, they sent Eller in at tight end to block on a sweep by Bill Brown that provided the winning touchdown.

The Moose, who is also among the fastest linemen in the league, says he often "feels like an animal in the pit. You get hit and hit again. You begin to act on instinct. Then you look up and it's only the second quarter. You start to make mistakes. You just can't let it happen. You have to keep your cool. To do that you don't have to enjoy being hit, but you do have to like to hit. Actually, the aggressiveness I show now on the field isn't me. I'm that way because I have to be."

He also has to be determined in order to have accomplished the things he has done. Early in the game in which the Vikings beat Los Angeles in December, 1969 and just prior to their NFL title victory over Cleveland, Eller intercepted a Roman Gabriel pass. The big lineman went all the way for what should have been a touchdown when flags were thrown up all over the place and whistles sounded. The Moose moved back toward the officials with a "what happened?" look on his face. "Some idiot jumped off side," Alan Page explained shamefacedly to Eller, "and that idiot had to be me."

They were on the sidelines later when Page said quietly to Eller, "I'll make it up to you."

"We'll both make it up," Moose replied.

Both did. Eller tussled with Bob Brown of the Rams midway in the fourth quarter as the latter tried to block off a rush against Gabriel. But Carl flattened the Ram quarterback for a safety. Page later picked off Roman's quick look-in pass and the interception helped Minnesota record the victory.

During the off-season Eller attends a movie workshop in Hollywood, Calif. He is serious about pursuing an acting career. "I am confident about my acting ability," he says. "Acting is less physical exertion than football. But it's exciting like football. The same amount of concentration and total involvement is re-

quired. I go to plays and rehearsals in Minnesota whenever I can. I like to see how they build a character, how he comes to life from beginning to end."

His prime interest is likely to be football for some time to come. "It's brought an awareness to me," he emphasizes. "It's taught me to handle myself. You always have to try to surpass yourself. When you can't do that any longer, you've reached your pinnacle."

DAVIS— LEARNING TO THINK IS THE BIG DIFFERENCE

Continued from page 49



devised the strategy, had gone 0-for-6. "I hate to go 0-for-anything," he laughed. But the key difference was that he was laughing.

On his bases-loaded triple the next day, he simply said, "Sometimes you get a little lucky. I had been going after some bad pitches and that was a bad pitch. I just hit it solid and got lucky."

Willie says he's seeing the ball better. "When you're in the majors for such a long time, you have the experience to know instinctively what to do," he says. Willie also claims he's hitting the ball "where they ain't."

It's an old cliché, but Willie knows what it's all about. "As soon as the ball is released, I can see it and I figure where the outfielders are. I simply try to hit the ball where there's a hole."

"I'm loose," he laughs. "I follow the ball and cover the plate. It's so simple I'm surprised I didn't learn it sooner. But everybody has to do it his own way and I did it mine."

Willie is proud of his physical toughness.

Throughout his career, injuries have plagued him and in 1969, the year he had a 31-game hitting streak and truly became a major league star, he was injured more than most players in a career. In fact, a lesser player wouldn't have come back from some of the pains.

He suffered a broken arm during the spring when Claude Raymond plunked him with a pitch. His cheek was smashed by a Dan McGinn fast ball in June and Juan Marichal cracked the cheekbone and damaged the right ear with a pitch in July.

"You know, most people wouldn't have come back from injuries like those," he says. "They can't keep me out too long, not really. I'm tough when it comes to injuries. I come back because I stay in shape, even when I'm not playing."

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Deeper chest...steel hard muscles...legs like tree-trunks...all these powerful features must be yours or you don't pay a thing...and it takes only 5 minutes a day.

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'The results of Bullworker are amazing after only 3 weeks.'—L. Sims, England.

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PROVE IT FOR YOURSELF FREE—in only 14 days!

To prove our absolute confidence in this world-tested power-builder, we challenge you to take up this guaranteed free offer. Try a 5-minute workout with the Bullworker 2 every day for 14 days. If, after that, you do not look and feel stronger...tougher...more dynamic, simply return it without owing a cent.

**BUILD
STEEL-LIKE
ARMS**

**BUILD
DEEPER
CHEST**

**BUILD
BROADER
SHOULDERS**

**BUILD MORE
POWERFUL
LEGS**

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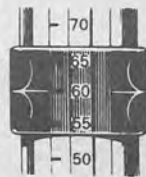
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E-11

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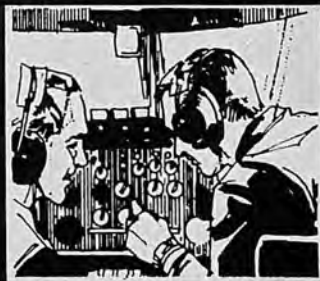
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